



Mah Dae-Bahman-Aspandarmad AY 1376 AY (F) • Mah Amardad-Shehrevan-Meher 1377 AY (Sh) • Mah Shehrevan-Meher-Avan 1377 AY (K)

**HAPPY NEW YEAR 2008!**

## PRESERVING OUR BOOKS AND MANUSCRIPTS

SANAD OF AKBAR PRESENTED TO MEHERJIRANA,  
ARCHIVED 02

### Also Inside:



Meherjirana Library  
at Navsari



NextGenNow  
Conference



Zarathushti  
Games

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Photo on cover:

Courtesy  
PARZOROriginal SANAD  
(charter) issued  
by Mughal Emperor  
Akbar, to first Dastur  
Meherjirana*Opinions expressed in the FEZANA Journal do not necessarily reflect the  
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## A word from the Editor

Dolly Dastoor

In preparing this issue the need for the preservation of manuscripts became very evident.. In here we do not deal with the contents of the different Zarathushtrian manuscripts, as that was well documented in FJ Summer 2005 but today we rather emphasize the why and how to preserve. .

It is generally accepted that under the Achaemenian rulers, the 21 nasks were deposited and preserved with great care in the royal treasuries of Persepolis and Samarkand, but these two archtype copies were destroyed during the invasion of Alexander in 330 BCE. The next five centuries brought in the period of darkness in the history of Zarathushtis, and the scattered scriptures were preserved in the memories of the priests, till they were ordered to be written down by Arsacid king Vologese and then by the Sasanian kings Ardeshir Papakan, with high priest Tansar and Shapur I, with high priest Kirder. A final revision of the Avesta was made during the reign of Sasanian King Shapur II (309-380 CE) under the direction of his chief minister and high priest Aturpat Marespand at which time a "canonical" text consisting of a fixed number of books was established. The Arab conquest of Iran in the seventh century caused civil disturbances, religious persecutions and the burning of many Zarathushti scriptures and books. A small group of Zarathushtis who remained in Iran or escaped to India were able to preserve a small body of texts (manuscripts)`. In India these manuscripts were copied and recopied from time to time but somewhere along the line neglect set in, and the manuscripts began to decay.

Presently, our most important manuscripts and books are at The Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, The Staatsbibliothek, Munich, The India Office Library, London, The British Museum, London, The Bodleian Library, Oxford, The University Library, Copenhagen, The University Library, Cambridge, The University Library, Florence. The K. R. Cama Oriental Institute, Bombay, The First Dastur Meherji Rana Library, Navsari. (see article by Ramiyar Karanjia). The books in the last two are not in very good condition and heroic efforts are made by World Zarathushti Cultural Foundation and PARZOR to preserve their integrity. (see article by Homi Dhalla)

Here in North America, the libraries organized by the Zoroastrian Association of Houston, the California Zoroastrian Centre, and the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago, the Zoroastrian Society of

Ontario, are contributing in their own way to preserving the written treasures and artifacts of the Zarathushti religion. Attempts are also made at preservation through digitalizing (see articles by Joseph Peterson and Natalie Gandhi)



Manuscripts not only enhance our understanding of the religion and worship in the narrow sense, but they paint a picture of the history, geography, social life, current affairs and international relationships of those times. The Dunhuang manuscripts collection unearthed from the cliff caves near the city of Dunhuang, China in 1900 and then sold to Aurel Stein in 1907 (see articles by Daraius Bharucha and Lylah Alphonse) raises a lot of questions about the spread of the Zarathushti religion. It contained the Sogdian manuscript with a version of the Ashem Vohu, dating ninth or tenth century, about 300 years older than the oldest extant copies of the Vendidad from India. The oldest manuscripts in India date from the thirteenth century and the manuscripts in Iran date from around the seventeenth century.

So how did this happen? How did a Sogdian manuscript get buried in a cave in China? Did some travelers carry manuscripts with them to pray and perform rituals while on the "silk road"? or was there a group of people in China practicing the Zarathushti religion? Are there other manuscripts buried in other parts of the world which would give us a clue to the social practices of the religion, beyond the parameters of India and Iran? Will the Zarathushti history be retold when more archeological digs surface and the world pays more attention to the legacy of the Zarathushti religion.

Happy 2008 to all, may there be peace around the world in all nations and in all hearts.

**Read and Send a gift subscription to family and friends**

# A Message from the President

Each person has a personal view of religion that is molded by family, friends and experiences. It is not surprising that one religion can have many different interpretations and diverse opinions. In addition, people have differing worldviews about what other religions and cultures are all about. But in spite of these differences, we all seem to agree that we are all seeking the same thing -- trying to make sense and bring meaning to our existence.

Today, many more people in North America are aware that the Zarathushti religion offers many excellent concepts, and has many followers living among them. We are organizing conferences, empowering our youth, helping those who may be less fortunate than us or may be impacted by calamities, and participating in interfaith activities; and we have a voice as a non-governmental organization in the UN. But we are hampered by our tendency to expect our volunteers to do all the hard work, often without proper guidance, resources, or infrastructure.

In the last 25 years, we have built some community infrastructures, starting with the foresighted help of Arbab Rustam Guiv. But dare-mehrs and meeting halls, scattered across USA and Canada, are not all we need. We now have the mandate to open a FEZANA office with a part-time administrator in Chicago. The office will serve as a central contact point for all our work in North America.

Now with the concurrence of the FEZANA executives, I am initiating the next step. I have asked the Infrastructure Working Group to explore the feasibility of establishing a central resource for Zarathushtrian literature, books, magazines, scholarly research material, etc. -- in essence, a North American library. This will provide us with a focal point for reliable information about our history, religion, scriptures; and our achievements, culture, hopes and aspirations. This library should be a safe, central depository of papers, books, CDs, and videos, donated by individuals or purchased or subscribed by FEZANA. I am sure many

Zarathushtis will donate their libraries to FEZANA in their wills.



We must have qualified staff to catalog everything for easy retrieval, and to ensure that all valuable documents are secure and safely preserved. In today's electronic age, we can make digitized files for important works, stored on a server and linked with all the major libraries, including the K.R. Cama Oriental Institute in Mumbai, the Mehrjirana Library in Navsari, and other worldwide scholarly resources.

You must be thinking: but we already have libraries here in Chicago, and in New York, Houston, and California. Why don't we link them together? Yes, that is a possibility, if the associations can provide the staff, computer resources, and the money to make it all happen at each location. Or we can pool our resources by elevating one of these libraries to make it a FEZANA Resource Center, with a full-time professional librarian in charge.

The Infrastructure Working Group will look into all our options; and make a recommendation within six months, in time for our Annual General Meeting in May 2008 in Los Angeles. Anyone interested in working with this group, please contact any of the FEZANA executives.

*Rustom Kevala*, FEZANA President





Happy holidays! We wish you and your family a very happy and healthy holiday and a prosperous New Year.

As we enter into a new year, it is our responsibility and duty towards our family to see to it that we get a periodic financial checkup. This is similar to having a yearly physical by your family physician. It has been known that people have a tendency to push this issue of a financial checkup to a back burner; however, the value and importance of this Financial Checkup cannot be stressed enough. Why wait until something happens that forces you to look into your financial situation when you can accomplish this task at your leisure.

Everyone needs to assess their situation from time to time. Estate planning, will and trust, power of attorney, insurance policies, long term care insurance, IRAs, annuities, primary and contingent beneficiaries, brokerage accounts, charitable remainder trust, bank accounts, bank deposit boxes, other important documents, etc., need to be updated and discussed with the people who are nearest and dearest to you.

When you sit and review your financial situation consider the tax advantages of making contributions to a charitable organization like FEZANA. In this manner by getting a tax deduction for your contribution, you will be helping to improve your own financial picture as well as

that of the Zarathushti community. The benefits and rewards are amazing.

Take the time to set up an appointment with your financial advisor and tax planner to get this important work accomplished. You will sleep better at night and have less worries on your mind.

Kindly make your check payable to FEZANA and mail to: Katayun Kapadia, FEZANA Treasurer, 3 Preamble Drive, Mount Laurel, NJ 08054

Happy Holidays. May Ahura Mazda bless you and our community.

**Jerry Kheradi, MD, FAGC,**

**Chairperson, FEZANA Funds and Finance**

**Committee: Katayun Kapadia, FEZANA Treasurer,  
Rashid Mehin, Behram Irani,  
Celeste Kheradi**



### FEZANA 20th. Anniversary Endowment Fund (Infrastructure)

|  |                    |
|--|--------------------|
| Behram Baxter, San Diego, CA                         | \$ 1,000.00        |
| Katie Irani for Irani Family Foundation, Houston, TX | \$ 1,000.00        |
| Kersas Dastur, Pace, FL                              | \$ 501.00          |
| Nancy & Jahanbux Daruwala, Aventura, FL              | \$ 500.00          |
| Yasmin & Rustom Kevala, Sun City Center, FL          | \$ 500.00          |
| Shernaz & Farhad Cama, Pittsburgh, PA                | \$ 101.00          |
| Delnaaz & Spenta Irani, Plano, TX                    | \$ 101.00          |
| Katayun & Kersi Kapadia, Mount Laurel, NJ            | \$ 101.00          |
| Arnavaz & Adi Vakharia, Flower Mound, TX             | \$ 101.00          |
| Gooloo & Gene Wunderlich, Annandale, VA              | \$ 100.00          |
| Saghar & Kamran Behroozi, Flower Mound, TX           | \$ 40.00           |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | <b>\$ 4,045.00</b> |

### FEZANA General Fund

|  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| Management Applied Programming, Inc., City of industry, CA | \$ 350.00        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | <b>\$ 350.00</b> |



# FINANCIAL

## FEZANA Welfare Fund

|  |             |
|--|-------------|
| Beach Cigar Group Inc., Miami, FL  | \$12,000.00 |
| Mehroo & Minu Patel, Westchester, IL   | \$ 5,000.00 |
| Zoroastrian Society of Ontario   | \$ 2,909.00 |
| G. M. Hamsayeh & P.A. Ardeshtari, Del Mar, CA  | \$ 1,000.00 |
| Perviz & Burjor Patel, Schaumburg, IL  | \$ 501.00   |
| Pervin Mogul, McKinney, TX   | \$ 500.00   |
| Zoroastrian Association of Pennsylvania & New Jersey (ZAPANJ)  | \$ 500.00   |
| Zenobia Dastur, Toronto, Ontario   | \$ 400.00   |
| In Memory of Soli Byramji Daruwala from the Daruwalas, the Wheelers & the May families, Santa Monica, CA | \$ 303.00   |
| Jamshed Homiar, Brampton, Ontario  | \$ 300.00   |
| Mahnaz & Farshad Rad, Baltimore, MD  | \$ 300.00   |
| Parvez Pohowalla, Portland, OR   | \$ 251.00   |
| Dorothy McKinney & Shazad Contractor, San Jose, CA   | \$ 250.00   |
| The Gazders, Arlington, MA   | \$ 250.00   |
| Sailesh Mahimtura & Sharukh Sariari, New York, NY  | \$ 250.00   |
| N.S. & B. N. Vadoli, Woodland Hills, CA  | \$ 250.00   |
| Ketayun & Noshir Daruwalla, Northbrook, IL   | \$ 201.00   |
| Aban & Hoshang Irani, Champaign, IL  | \$ 201.00   |
| Farzana & Kaizad Irani, Champaign, IL  | \$ 201.00   |
| Pheroza & Rohinton Sethna, New York, NY  | \$ 201.00   |
| Dady Billimoria, Mississauga, Ontario  | \$ 200.00   |
| Bakhtawar & Kershaw Byramji, Houston, TX   | \$ 200.00   |
| Piloo & Pesi Chacha, Singapore   | \$ 200.00   |
| Vahishta & Shiavax Cowasji, McVillie, ND   | \$ 200.00   |
| Cainaz Vakharia & Michael Heaton, San Antonio, TX  | \$ 200.00   |
| FP Marketing Inc., Charlotte, NC   | \$ 200.00   |
| Kimberly & Hosi Mehta, Elmhurst, IL  | \$ 200.00   |
| Meher & Afshad Mistri, Mountain View, CA   | \$ 200.00   |
| Roxane & Eruch Mody, Bellingham, MA  | \$ 200.00   |
| Maharukh & Daraius Patel, Hoffman Estates, IL  | \$ 200.00   |
| Naheed Vatcha, Gaithersburg, MD  | \$ 200.00   |
| Shireen Wania, Oakville, Ontario   | \$ 200.00   |
| Roxanne Vadoli & Zubin Mistry, Woodland Hills, CA  | \$ 151.00   |
| Parwana & Marazban Chhor, Robbinsville, NJ   | \$ 150.00   |
| Maharukh & Kaizad Patel, Shrewsbury, MA  | \$ 150.00   |
| Urvaksh Patel, Hoffman Estates, IL   | \$ 150.00   |
| Kerbanu & Viraf Pudumjee, Palos Verdes Est, CA   | \$ 150.00   |
| K. K. & K. H. Patel, Milton, Ontario   | \$ 125.00   |



## ANNOUNCEMENT

The Zoroastrian Sports Committee (ZSC) is proud to announce the

"11th Zarathushti Games" to be held in the beautiful city of San Diego, California, USA from July 2nd to July 6th, 2008.

All Zarathushti athletes are encouraged to participate.

Prove your muscle in Sunny Southern California and win the Gold.

Make new friends and strengthen old friendships.

Visit: <http://www.zathletics.com/> for more up-to-date information.



# FINANCIAL

|  |                    |
|--|--------------------|
| Cyrus Austin, Chandler, AZ                                     | \$ 101.00          |
| Kaizer Austin, Harbord, NSW, Australia                         | \$ 101.00          |
| Arnavaz & Afshan Barshan, Darien, IL                           | \$ 101.00          |
| Bachi Bilimoria, Northbrook, IL                                | \$ 101.00          |
| Nilufer Darukhanavala, Naperville, IL                          | \$ 101.00          |
| Anahita & Ruzbeh Daruwalla, Buena Park, CA                     | \$ 101.00          |
| Tehmi & Firdaus Dastoor, Roanoke, VA                           | \$ 101.00          |
| Meher Dastur, Lincoln, CA                                      | \$ 101.00          |
| Soonamai & Jamsheed Dessai, Santa Rosa, CA                     | \$ 101.00          |
| Shahdokht & Jimmy Dholoo, Gaithersburg, MD                     | \$ 101.00          |
| Darius Dubash, Canton, GA                                      | \$ 101.00          |
| Perzan Irani, New York, NY                                     | \$ 101.00          |
| Meher & Jal Panthaky, Canada                                   | \$ 101.00          |
| Anaheet & Farhad Sethna, Richmond Hill, Ontario                | \$ 101.00          |
| Arnavaz & Adi Vakharia, Flower Mound, TX                       | \$ 101.00          |
| A.P. & P.A. Vazifdar, Bolingbrook, IL                          | \$ 101.00          |
| Dinaz Weber, Hanover Park, IL                                  | \$ 101.00          |
| Anonymous  | \$ 100.00          |
| Tanaz & Zarir Bhandara, Irvine, CA                             | \$ 100.00          |
| Pauruchisty & Sam Bhathena, Wheaton, MD                        | \$ 100.00          |
| Virsis & Farrokh Billimoria, Redwood City, CA                  | \$ 100.00          |
| Sharmin Choksey & Mehernosh Engineer, Fremont, CA              | \$ 100.00          |
| Hutoxi & Farhad Contractor, Pittsburgh, PA                     | \$ 100.00          |
| Farrah & Neville Cooper, Markham, Ontario                      | \$ 100.00          |
| Mahrukh & Rohintan Deputy, West Bloomfield, MI                 | \$ 100.00          |
| Malcolm Dumasia, Fremont, CA                                   | \$ 100.00          |
| Shiraz & Tehmaas Gorimaar, Doylestown, PA                      | \$ 100.00          |
| Shaila & Yesvy Gustasp, Silver Spring, MD                      | \$ 100.00          |
| Integrity Investment Advisors, Inc., San Diego, CA             | \$ 100.00          |
| Delnaz & Spenta Irani, Plano, TX                               | \$ 100.00          |
| Joseph Naoki Kain, Santa Clara, CA                             | \$ 100.00          |
| Jerina & Uday Kapoor, Saratoga, CA                             | \$ 100.00          |
| Shirine & Gev Karkaria, Kirkland, Quebec                       | \$ 100.00          |
| Homai & Arvand Kasad, Belmont, CA                              | \$ 100.00          |
| Scheherazade Khambata, Herndon, VA                             | \$ 100.00          |
| Nawaz & Hoshi Merchant, Ringoes, NJ                            | \$ 100.00          |
| Pervin & Farhad Narielvala, Toano, VA                          | \$ 100.00          |
| Zenobia & Behram Panthaki, Falls Church, VA                    | \$ 100.00          |
| Phoenix International, Brookfield, WI                          | \$ 100.00          |
| Azita & Hoshang Samya, North Potomac, MD                       | \$ 100.00          |
| Dilnaz Todiwala, Sunnyvale, CA                                 | \$ 100.00          |
| Armita Varjavand & Cyrus Hormozi, Hagerstown, MD               | \$ 100.00          |
| 46 donors (less than \$100 each)                               | \$ 1,691.00        |
| 14 donors from Zoroastrian Assoc. of Chicago (less than \$100) | \$ 588.00          |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | <b>\$35,540.00</b> |

**I don't know what your  
destiny will be, but one  
thing I know;  
the only ones among  
you who will be really  
happy,  
are those who have  
sought and found how  
to Serve.**

*Albert Schweitzer.*



# FINANCIAL

## FEZANA Academic Education Scholarship Fund

|  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| Ardeshir Sharifabadi, Calgary, Alberta | \$ 600.00        |
| Sorab Panday, Herndon, VA              | \$ 200.00        |
| Goolu Wunderlich, Annandale, VA        | \$ 100.00        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                           | <b>\$ 900.00</b> |

## Kapadia Scholarship Endowment Fund

|  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| H. J. and Virginia Tata, Monroeville, PA | \$ 150.00        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                             | <b>\$ 150.00</b> |

## FEZANA Creative & Performing Arts Scholarship Fund

|                           |                  |
|---------------------------|------------------|
| Sorab Panday, Herndon, VA | \$ 200.00        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>              | <b>\$ 200.00</b> |

## FEZANA Sports Scholarship Fund

|  |                 |
|--|-----------------|
| H. J. and Virginia Tata, Monroeville, PA | \$ 75.00        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                             | <b>\$ 75.00</b> |

## Jungalwala Lecture Series

|   |                  |
|---|------------------|
| Rashna & Firdosh Mehta, Weatherford, TX   | \$ 500.00        |
| Katayun & Kersi Kapadia, Mount Laurel, NJ | \$ 101.00        |
| Wish TV, Indianapolis, IN                 | \$ 100.00        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                              | <b>\$ 701.00</b> |

## Donations for sending Zarathusti Iranian Youth to 4th. WZYC

|   |                    |
|---|--------------------|
| Mandana & Mehrdad Zomorodi, Culver City, CA | \$ 2,000.00        |
| Zoroastrian Society of Ontario              | \$ 2,000.00        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                | <b>\$ 4,000.00</b> |

## Mobed Healthcare Initiative

|   |                    |
|---|--------------------|
| Arnavaz Dua, Waukesha, WI                   | \$ 1,000.00        |
| Nazneen & Kershaw Khumbatta, Sugar Land, TX | \$ 401.00          |
| Zarine & Fali Sidhva, Phoenixville, PA      | \$ 321.00          |
| Maneck & Farokh Contractor, Kenner, LA      | \$ 200.00          |
| Dolly Malva, Downey, CA                     | \$ 101.00          |
| Nergis & Adi Unwalla, Marlton, NJ           | \$ 101.00          |
| Parvin & Kai Mobed, Westmont, IL            | \$ 100.00          |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                | <b>\$ 2,224.00</b> |

**TOTAL DONATION RECEIVED JULY-SEPTEMBER 2007** **\$48,185.00**

## Maya Angelou :

"I've learned that regardless of your relationship with your parents, you'll miss them when they're gone from your life."

"I've learned that whenever I decide something with an open heart, I usually make the right decision."

"I've learned that every day you should reach out and touch someone. People love a warm hug, or just a friendly pat on the back."

"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."

## CHINA TO RING IN 2008 WITH ZUBIN MEHTA

*Mehta will conduct the Israeli Philharmonic Orchestra and open the concert with "Olympic Fanfare" to mark the start of the year of the Olympic Games in Beijing. The orchestra will also play "Ode to the Red Flag" a symphony written by chinese composer Lv Qiming*

*The orchestra will also perform in Shenzhen and Shanghai*

# Critically Speaking

## "Providing Welfare and Support Goes Beyond Just Giving Money"

The weekend of October 20th through October 23rd is just one of those many moments when a local Zarathushti organization proved once again that generosity and the desire to help and serve others in need are tenets by which many Zarathushtis around the world live their daily lives.

For those of you who are not familiar with the story of Baby Ushta, a little summary is in order. On July 3rd 2007, a 4 year old girl named Ushta fell into a pot of boiling milk in Mumbai, India. She suffered intense burns on 70% of her body. For the first two months after her accident she was treated at Masina hospital in Mumbai.

In an effort to help this young child, the Critical Assistance Committee raised funds to bring her to the United States to receive comprehensive treatment at Shriner's Hospital in Boston, MA, which offers free treatment.

### **Baby Ushta's 5th birthday was celebrated in Boston by ZAGBA, the local Zarathushti organization.**

In attending this celebration, our hearts were filled with joy when we noticed the level of care and attention to detail that were exhibited by the local Zarathushtis. It was then that we were reminded that while the Critical Assistance Committee may have jump started this project to assist young Ushta by providing funds; it is truly the local Zarathushti population that has helped to make her stay as comfortable and welcoming as possible.

In traditional style, we had the pleasure of celebrating Ushta's birthday twice, on her Roj and her English calendar date. When I first saw Ushta she was very quiet but as the evening passed she opened up and was laughing & talking & did not want us to leave. I was also extremely happy to see just how far she had come in her treatment and how much better she looked in comparison to the pictures I had seen taken soon after her accident. The evening was filled with laughter, smiles, and many games of peek-a-boo. Her Roj birthday, culminated with sharing of gifts and chocolate cake.

On October 23rd (her English birthday), some members of ZAGBA put together a birthday celebration for young Ushta that warmed not only her heart, but the hearts of those on the Critical Assistance Committee in the display of generosity and dedication to make this young girl's birthday truly special. The day began with a

presentation of gifts. Several handwritten cards crafted by the local youth, ages 4 through 14, at the Children's Religious Class were distributed. As each card was read to her, Ushta held on tightly to her pile of read cards, asking questions and commenting on what was written and drawn. She was most hopeful, however, with the thought of actually meeting the children who had written the cards for her.



She further enjoyed a video that was put together by the youth of ZAGBA in which all the older children shared happy thoughts and gave their blessings and the younger ones joined together to sing her Happy Birthday. She was most excited that 2 young children had come to visit her, especially since up until this time her visitors had been mostly adults.

Ushta was joined by many members of ZAGBA including the **Bhatena, Dhondy, and Dubash families, Ketayun Ghista and Perinaaz Wadia**. While she enjoyed her requested dinner of chicken biryani, those around her ate chicken and lamb kababs with roti and idli. Wearing Elmo hats, the group sang Happy Birthday to her as she cut her chocolate cake and wore one of three crowns that she received for her birthday.

A visit by her favorite nurse during the party increased the smile that was already on her face. But, as the night grew older and Ushta started to get tired, visitors took their cue and said their final goodbyes.

While many of the accounts of that night may not sound particularly exciting or adventurous, it was one of those days where everyone was happy to bring warmth into the life of someone in need and share this special day with a very special girl who until a few months ago nobody in the local community even knew. The entire birthday celebration was put together as if Ushta was the child of one of the local Zarathushtis and the amount of thought this entire community put into making her 5th birthday extra special is something that should not go without recognition.

The members of ZAGBA and all those responsible for planning this wonderful event for Baby Ushta are proof of the type of joy, selfless acts of kindness and love

can bring into the hearts of all those involved. While the Critical Assistance Committee might have secured the funds to help Ushta get better, it is the love all around her that she appreciates the most.

From the day Ushta and her mother landed in Boston, ZAGBA members accompanied them from the airport to the hospital and have been there for the family on a daily basis and supporting them with company and home cooked meals, etc. They have made a schedule so

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**Freyaz Shroff** [freycz@aol.com](mailto:freycz@aol.com)

*"Believe in the strength that comes from one hand holding another through times of trouble"*

-Anonymous

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## Appeal -

### AN APPEAL TO ZARATHUSHTIS OF NORTH AMERICA

As you are aware there is turmoil among the Parsi/Zarathushti community in India that has caused schisms within. In the midst of the disputes, disagreements and grand standing of people with personal agenda, it is the lot of the poor elderly Mobeds who have served the community and the Zarathushti Faith throughout their lives with dedication, is sadly overlooked. As they are suffering in a poverty-stricken lifestyle, so are some of the places of worship –the Agiaries - particularly in Mumbai, India.

Mr. Jimmy Mistry, a Zarathushti with zeal for the preservation of our noble Faith is determined to do something that can bring about expedient and meaningful results within a short time. He has identified the impoverished condition of Mobeds and dilapidated state of some of the Agiaries, as areas that need immediate attention. He has personally renovated Rustom Framna Agiary and Langrana Godivala Agiary in Mumbai. To further demonstrate his genuine desire to do Good actions (Huvareshta), he founded a Public Charitable Trust called The Parsi Resource Group (PRG).

There is acute need for assistance in the area of Cashless Mediclaim Insurance Scheme that Jimmy has initiated. This scheme is designed to cover all health insurance with pre-existing diseases including cancer for over 1300 members of the families of destitute Mobeds. The coverage involves a floater Policy of INR 2 lac (Rs. 200,000.00) per family from ICICI Lombard General Insurance. PRG is trying to collect for these destitute families some INR 30 lacs and which leaves them with a shortfall of INR 25 lacs.

I plead to the Zarathushtis of North America to rise to the occasion with compassion for this deserving cause. Kindly join me in starting "**Healthcare Fund Initiative for Destitute Mobeds of India**". I appeal you to unite and to help change the impoverished lifestyle of those who have helped keep the fires of our faith ablaze, and gift them a healthy and comfortable living in the winter of their lives. I beseech you to donate generously to this cause.

**IN CANADA** make your cheques to ZSO marked in the memo: **Healthcare Initiative for Mobeds of India**. Mail to: The Treasurer, Zoroastrian Society Of Ontario, 3590 Bayview Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, M2M 3S6

**IN USA** make your cheques to Fezana Welfare Committee marked in the memo **Healthcare Initiative for Mobeds of India** Mail to: Mrs Ketayun Kapadia, 3, Preamble Drive, Mount Laurel, NJ 08054 USA

With Peace and Grace from Ahura Mazda

**Ervad Dr Jehan Bagli**  
**President, NAMC**

# ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIPS

## WINNERS FOR 2007-08

### MEHRABAN AND MORVORID KHERADI ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP (FEZANA SCHOLAR)

. Fiona Petigara. Medicine, University of British Columbia (\$5000)

### FEZANA 20th ANNIVERSARY SCHOLARSHIP

.Katayoun Salamati Industrial and System Engineering , University of Southern California (\$3000)

### BEHRAM KAPADIA ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP

Farhad Jamshidi Structural Civil Engineering, University of California, Berkeley (\$1000)

### FEZANA SCHOLARSHIPS

- 1.Nazneen Irani, Computer Science and Engineering, Penn State University
- 2.Yazed Anklesaria, Aerospace Engineering, University of Missouri.
- 3.Parisa Javedani, Human Physiology and Pre-Med , University of Oregon
- 4.Freya Motafram, Business Administration, University of Michigan
- 5.Bahareh Abadian, Biology Orange Coast College, California,
- 6.Taronish Irani, Clinical Psychology (doctoral student) at Wright State, University in Ohio.(\$2000 each)

### MEHRABAN & PARIDOKHT ZARTOSHTY EDUCATION FUND SCHOLARSHIPS

**Fiona Petigara, North Vancouver, B.C.** first year of Medical School at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver – \$2,000

**Narius Dastur, New Westminster, B.C.** – Bachelor of Applied Science in Computing Science at the Simon Fraser University, Burnaby \$1,500

### MOOBED FARIDOON ZARDOSHTY RELIGIOUS EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP 2007- 08

**Rastin Mehri** of Burnaby, British Columbia has been awarded the Moobed Faridoon Zardoshty Religion Education Scholarship this year. The scholarship is \$1500/ per year for 3 years.

Rastin will be working towards his PhD at SOAS, London, UK under the guidance of Prof. Almut Hintze.

**California Zoroastrian Center - Council on Persian Culture and Massiah Foundation Educational Scholarships** with matching funds from World Zoroastrian Organization and ERSF of UK

Each winner will receive \$5000

### Ms. Shireen Farhad Cama

Harvard University medical school, Yale University; BA with honors. Federation of Zoroastrian Association of North America scholar. Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York scholar. Paul Dudley White Traveling Fellowship and seminar in Global Health Equity, Share and Care Foundation Fellowship, Richter Fellowship, Heinz Family Scholarship, Yale Club of Pittsburgh Scholarship.

### Ms. Natasha Irani Demehri

University of Florida, Biological Sciences, Director of health policy for American Medical Student Association, Work of Heart award; UF collegiate organization of the year, Golden key international honors society, 1st place; Orange county regional science & engineering fair.



# ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIPS

## Ms. Venus Vakhshoori

El Camino Real High School, 1st place US Academic Decathlon Division 1. Nation's highest scoring student. Honors; overall US Academic scholarship winner. Honors; overall Hilton scholarship.

## Mr. Neekaan Oshidary

Stanford psychophysiology and clinical immunology, the Stephen Gerry memorial science award winner for outstanding performance in Chemistry. Honors; Saint Francis academic achievement. Elks national foundation, most valuable student scholarship award.



## CALENDAR OF FESTIVALS DECEMBER 2007 TO MAY 2008

| Festival                         | Mah         | Roz                         |               | Date   |        | Day  |     | S/K/F |
|----------------------------------|-------------|-----------------------------|---------------|--------|--------|------|-----|-------|
|                                  |             | From                        | To            | From   | To     | From | To  |       |
| <b>Maidyoshyem Gahambar</b>      | Tir         | Khorshed                    | Dae-Pa- Meher | 28-Nov | 2-Dec  | Wed  | Sun | S     |
| Yalda                            | Dae         | Khordad                     |               | 21-Dec |        | Fri  |     | F     |
| Zarhosht no Diso                 | Dae         | Khorshed                    |               | 26-Dec |        | Wed  |     | F     |
| <b>Maidyarem Gahambar</b>        | Dae         | Meher                       | Behram        | 31-Dec | 4-Jan  | Mon  | Fri | F     |
| Jashn-e-Daegan                   | Dae         | Dae-Pa-Din                  |               | 7-Jan  |        | Mon  |     | F     |
| <b>Paitishem Gahambar</b>        | Shahrevar   | Ashtad                      | Aneran        | 12-Jan | 16-Jan | Sat  | Wed | K     |
| Jashn-e-Bahmanan                 | Bahman      | Bahman                      |               | 16-Jan |        | Wed  |     | F     |
| Jashn-e-Sadeh                    | Bahman      | Meher                       |               | 30-Jan |        | Wed  |     | F     |
| Meher nu Parab                   | Meher       | Meher                       |               | 1-Feb  |        | Fri  |     | K     |
| <b>Paitishem Gahambar</b>        | Shahrevar   | Ashtad                      | Aneran        | 11-Feb | 15-Feb | Mon  | Fri | S     |
| <b>Ayathrem Gahambar</b>         | Meher       | Ashtad                      | Aneran        | 11-Feb | 15-Feb | Mon  | Fri | K     |
| Avan Ardevisoor nu Parab         | Avan        | Avan                        |               | 25-Feb |        | Mon  |     | K     |
| Meher nu Parab                   | Meher       | Meher                       |               | 2-Mar  |        | Sun  |     | S     |
| <b>Ayathrem Gahambar</b>         | Meher       | Ashtad                      | Aneran        | 12-Mar | 16-Mar | Wed  | Sun | S     |
| <b>Hamaspathmaidyem Gahambar</b> | Ahunavad    | Gatha to Vahishtoisht Gatha |               | 15-Mar | 19-Mar | Sat  | Wed | F     |
| Jamshedi Nowroze                 | Fravardin   | Hormazd                     |               | 21-Mar |        | Fri  |     | F     |
| Atash nu Parab                   | Adar        | Adar                        |               | 25-Mar |        | Tue  |     | K     |
| Khordad Sal                      | Fravardin   | Khordad                     |               | 28-Mar |        | Wed  |     | F     |
| Avan Ardevisoor nu Parab         | Avan        | Avan                        |               | 28-Mar |        | Wed  |     | S     |
| Fravardegan                      | Fravardin   | Fravardin                   |               | 8-Apr  |        | Tue  |     | F     |
| Jashn-e-Ardibeheshtagan          | Ardibehesht | Ardibehesht                 |               | 22-Apr |        | Tue  |     | F     |
| Atash nu Parab                   | Adar        | Adar                        |               | 24-Apr |        | Thu  |     | S     |
| Zarhosht no Diso                 | Dae         | Khorshed                    |               | 28-Apr |        | Sat  |     | K     |
| <b>Maidyozarem Gahambar</b>      | Artibehesht | Khorshed                    | Dae-Pa- Meher | 30-Apr | 4-May  | Wed  | Sun | F     |
| <b>Maidyarem Gahambar</b>        | Dae         | Meher                       | Behram        | 1-May  | 5-May  | Thu  | Mon | K     |
| Dae Mah nu Jashan                | Dae         | Fravardin                   |               | 4-May  |        | Sun  |     | K     |
| Homajee ni Baa)                  | Dae         | Govad                       |               | 7-May  |        | Wed  |     | K     |
| Zarhosht no Diso                 | Dae         | Khorshed                    |               | 28-May |        | Mon  |     | S     |
| <b>Maidyarem Gahambar</b>        | Dae         | Meher                       | Behram        | 31-May | 4-Jun  | Sat  | Wed | S     |

S-Shahenshai, K-Kadmi, F-Fasli



## COMING EVENTS

**2007 YEAR OF RUMI** declared by UNESCO at the request of the GOVERNMENT OF TAJIKISTAN to celebrate the 800th anniversary of the birth of Mevlana Celaled-din-i Belhi-Rumi (Maulana Jalal-ud-Din Balkhi Rumi), Persian poet and philosopher (1207-1273). A float, highlighting the contributions of Rumi was at the Persian Parade in New York to celebrate Norooz, March 2007.

**NOVEMBER 16-19, "ZOROASTRIANISM 101: PRACTICING ZOROASTRIAN CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS IN NORTH AMERICA" AND SSZ CONFERENCE 2007**, at Arbab Rustom Guiv Darbe Mehr, Chicago. Contact Pallan Ichaporia at [PRIchaporia@aol.com](mailto:PRIchaporia@aol.com) or Rohinton Rivetna at [rivetna@aol.com](mailto:rivetna@aol.com)

**DECEMBER 2007, WORLD YOUTH CONGRESS, BALLARAT, AUSTRALIA.**

The FOURTH World Zoroastrian Youth Congress "Back to the Future" will be held at the University of Ballarat, Victoria, Australia, December 27, 2007 to January 3, 2008 Contact Shiraz Mistry, at [Smileysjm@optusnet.com.au](mailto:Smileysjm@optusnet.com.au)

**JANUARY 2008, WZCC AGM, MUMBAI/PUNE, INDIA**

The 2007 Annual General Meeting of the World Zoroastrian Chamber of Commerce will be held in MUMBAI/PUNE, January 13th and 14th. Members are advised to arrive in Mumbai on January 12, 2008 and departure should be planned for January 15, 2008. Contact [zcommisariat@hotmail.com](mailto:zcommisariat@hotmail.com)

**JANUARY 2008 "COMING TOGETHER ROUNDTABLE" "COMING TOGETHER ROUNDTABLE - 2008"** will be held in Mumbai, January 15, at the Mancherji Joshi Athornan Madressa Hall, Dadar, Mumbai

Leaders from all Zarathushti organizations worldwide and any interested persons are invited to "Come Together and Work Together" on issues/challenges/projects for our worldwide Zarathushti Community Without Borders. Contact Rohinton Rivetna at [rivetna@aol.com](mailto:rivetna@aol.com).

The 9th Annual Global Youth Service Days April 25-27, 2008 Visit: [www.gysd.net](http://www.gysd.net)

**MAY 2008 FEZANA AGM, California {CZC}**

The Annual General Meeting of FEZANA will be held May 9-11, 2008 in Los Angeles, hosted by the California Zoroastrian Centre (CZC)

**MAY 2008 RELIGIONS FOR PEACE, EUROPE**

Major International Symposium Encounter 2008, will bring together 200 religious representatives to address challenges such as cultural and national identity, economic disparity, and lack of community cohesion. Contact: [wcrp@btconnect.com](mailto:wcrp@btconnect.com) Leadership provided by Mr. Jehangir Sarosh, President of Religions for Peace-Europe.

**JULY 2008, ELEVENTH ZARATHUSHTI GAMES, San Diego, CA.**

The eleventh Zarathushti games will be held June 30 -July 4, 2008

in San Diego. See more at <http://www.sandiego.org/nav/Visitors>.

**SUMMER 2008, FEZANA YOUTH LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE.**



**DECEMBER 2009, WORLD CONGRESS, DUBAI.**

9th World Zoroastrian Congress "Unity Through the Sands of Time" to be held in Dubai, December 28-31, 2009. Contact [meher\\_bhesania@hotmail.com](mailto:meher_bhesania@hotmail.com)



University of Missouri, Kansas City, Details to follow. Contact



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## *The 5th Zarathushti Unity Cup* AVIATION PARK, REDONDO BEACH, CALIFORNIA - September 1-3 2007

By Arsham Dianat

On odd-numbered years, such as this one, Zarathushtis everywhere think of one thing and one thing only: the upcoming Zarathushti Unity Cup. Seasoned veterans of the game, like the defending champion Eshghi Boys, spent their summer strategizing on how to reclaim their top spot on the Zarathushti soccer stage while newcomers to the tournament, the Underdogs and Niroo, dreamt about chances of experiencing glory first-hand.

Held on Labor Day Weekend, a national holiday meant to provide hard workers of this country with a much needed break, a "break" was the last thing on the minds of the participants, volunteers, and spectators of this year's Unity Cup. Whether it was sprinting on the field in hopes of scoring a goal, lending a helping hand, or simply cheering until their voices cracked, everyone stayed active and involved, from the opening kickoff to the final whistle. Growing in popularity with each successive year, this past Labor Day Weekend was no exception as the tournament boasted its highest number of participants. The field consisted of 10 highly competitive and equally talented adult teams as well as 3 determined youth teams.

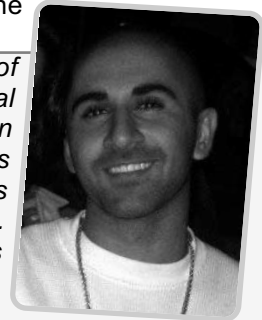


Months of practice and preparation were put to the test early Saturday morning as opposing hands were shaken and the initial whistle was finally blown by the referee. Following the first kick of the ball at midfield, the day was full of nonstop action, labeling the event as possibly the greatest show on turf. The dazzling moves of tournament MVP *Shahin Bhaghwagar* never ceased to wow the crowd, and the positive attitude as well as friendly but competitive character of *Sherwin Bakhtiari* (photo left) won the hearts of his teammates as well as opponents, earning him the Sportsmanship Award. On a day that the sun shone bright, the players shone brighter as some games proved to be hard-fought and low scoring defensive battles while

others were characterized by high-scoring and high-powered offenses.

With two games taking place simultaneously, spectators got in as much exercise as the players as they ran from field to field to catch a glimpse of all the superb highlights the games had to offer. Just as the players had prepared themselves for the physically and mentally challenging two days of soccer, the dedicated fans and spectators had done some preparing of their own. Backers of the six Amigos wasted no time in creating a fan base and the fans in support of team Arizona Sun seemed to have spent the same amount of time on their cheers as their players put in on their soccer techniques. But with the constant ongoing screaming, no one's voice was louder than that of the parents cheering for their kids along the sideline. Representing the future generation, the sibling combination of *Kamilia* and *Kamron Nosrat* showed everyone that the family connection can extend from the household to the soccer field, while the amazing footwork of first place Team 2 teammates *Ryeka Namiri* and *Omid Partovi* provided everyone a little dose of the potential talent to be displayed in the years to come.

*Arsham Dianat, son of Behnaz Dianat, the original member of ZSC, has been involved with the sports committee ever since his mom could make him write. He is an avid fan of all sports and loves promoting the games among all age groups. In addition to working on the committee, Arsham is a full-time student majoring in biology.*



Following the day's events on the soccer field, the players were given another chance to test their quick feet, this time on the dance floor. The afternoon's heated competitions were complemented by the cool and serene, yet festive environment at the Ayres Hotel on Saturday Night. Themed as a Black and White Party, everyone came donned in their best outfits and ready to dance the night away to the tunes provided by DJ Ramin. It was a time where opponents on the soccer field exchanged words instead of goals, and where all others alike reunited with old friends and made new ones.

Even with the late-night festivities, both fans and players woke up early for the final games of the tournament the next morning, showing their support and exemplifying unity. After five hard-fought games, the young but experienced Pedram team, named after the well-loved and respected Zarathushti athlete and champion *Pedram Zohrabi* who fell to cancer in the past year, found themselves in the finals against the heavy-favorites and defending champion Eshghi Boys. In a game where the premier soccer talents in the Zarathushti community were showcased, the Eshghi Boys once again showed why they are the team to beat, winning 3-0 behind the solid goal keeping of *Hooshang Jamshidi* and the dual goal-scoring threat of *Shahin Jamshidi* and *Rostam Dehmoobed*. To the victors comes the prize, and until next time, the rest of the field can only dream and hope for a time when they too will be able to raise the trophy and be called the best.

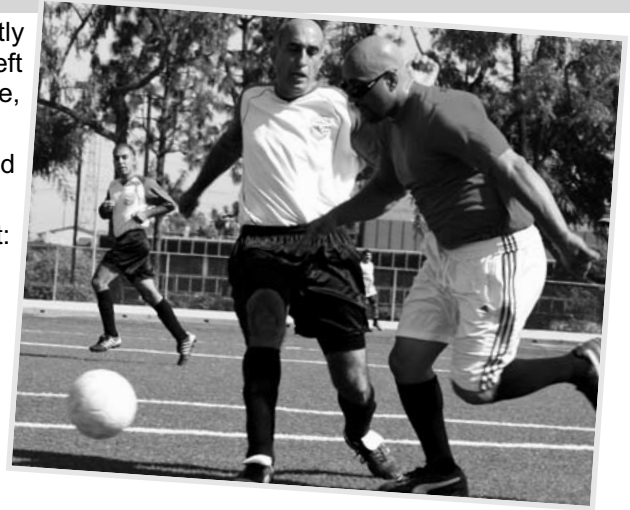


## *The 5th Larathushti Unity Cup*

In a weekend filled with fierce competition, fun-filled nightly activities, and the rekindling of friendships, there was nothing left at the end of the day but the turf on the field, a simple drive home, and a mind full of memories that would last a lifetime.

Photo Behrouz Mehrkhodavandi (in white, on left ) and Houman Shad (in red, on right )

To view pictures and the results for this event please visit:  
<http://zathletics.com/>



### Winning Teams

ESHGHI BOYS - 1ST PLACE in Beige T shirts  
PEDRAM - 2ND PLACE in Blue T shirts (standing)



Awards ceremony children



Awards ceremony adults



# **NextGenNow: Raising the Standard, Advancing the Cause Keep the flame burning**

**Jim Engineer**  
**Co-Chair, NextGenNow**



For the first time in our young North American Zarathushti history, a consensus conversation began on the issues of our time.

The NextGenNow conference, held in Chicago Oct. 12-14, united approximately 100 next generation leaders and interested attendees from all walks of life in a conference that, for the first time, spotlighted the multiplicity of challenges facing our community.

Now a conversation and soon to be a movement, NextGenNow was born at the Arbab Rustom Guiv Darbe Mehr center and hosted by the Zoroastrian Association of Chicago, in conjunction with FEZANA and ZYNA, the Zoroastrian Youth of North America.

## **WHY NOW?**

Challenging a number of our Zarathushti communities has been a bottleneck of leadership that has gradually taken a toll on the collective advancement of our North American Zarathushti communities.

Stagnancy and disenfranchisement have affected our ability to unite the communities we have, and to recruit new talent into leadership ranks. This vacuum or void was the impetus for NextGenNow, and penultimate reason for its success.

## **WHAT MADE NG07 DIFFERENT FROM OTHER CONGRESSES AND CONFERENCES?**

Outstanding hosting and organization: A modest \$30 registration fee provided for attendee meals at the conference, transportation to/from airports and host accommodations for those interested in staying with friends, family or fellow Zarathushtis.

NG07 represented the first time a North American Zarathushti conference has united next generation leadership under one roof with the specific aim of addressing and sharing perspectives on the views that will shape their future.

NG07 for the first time proposed and set forth a framework for perpetuating specific action items through to the next NextGenNow conference to be held in 2008 on the West coast.

NG07 provided an interactive environment for learning, idea sharing and debating the issues of our time through panel discussions, small group discussion and large town-hall-style Q&A sessions.

NG07, like no other Zarathushti gathering, was designed with the specific intent of cultivating next generation leadership in an intimate, action-oriented conference setting.

Social media: As a way to broaden the reach of NextGenNow, organizers harnessed the power of social media by creating a Facebook group that has attracted and united more than 50 interested Zarathushtis worldwide. Attendees hailed largely from North America and are currently at the college/university level.



## SCORING POINTS.

NextGenNow received outstanding marks from attendees. In a post-conference survey of attendees, all attendee respondents ranked the Overall Conference with either an 'A' for outstanding or 'B' for above average.

Other high marks were received for food, program book, quality of speakers, session topics and basic organization. One consistent improvement point cited by attendees was the need for more FEZANA member associations to promote NextGenNow conferences in advance to their membership base.

## SETTING THE PACE

NextGenNow will be remembered as an historic event that united generations, presented a multiplicity of views, provided a forum for dialogue, and gave a new generation of leaders the ability to lead.

To help improve awareness of our storied heritage and challenges ahead, two media organizations offered in-depth coverage of NextGenNow, the Chicago Tribune, which ranks among the top five newspapers in the United States, [http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/local/chi-zoroastrians\\_15oct15,0,5434003story](http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/local/chi-zoroastrians_15oct15,0,5434003story) and the Chicago-based Asian-American News Network on television.

NextGenNow would not have been possible without the dedication of its organizing base, and a passion at all age levels to simply get things done for the greater good of our North American Zarathushti community.



Co-Chairs Jim Engineer  
(left), Nikan Khatibi (right)



Some partying too!!

**PROGRAM: PERPETUATE, EDUCATE, ENCOURAGE, EMPOWER**

**FRIDAY OCTOBER 12,**

WELCOME HUMBANDAGI,

**SATURDAY OCTOBER 13,**

SESSION I EDUCATION , AWARENESS, PERPETUATION (AWARENESS)

SESSION II ACHIEVING HARMONY THROUGH DIVERSITY (UNITY)

**SUNDAY OCTOBER 14**

SESSION III COMMUNITY BUILDING : THE NEXT GENERATION BLUEPRINT

**(INFRASTRUCTURE)**

RECAP –TOP TEAM IDEAS DEVELOPED AT THE CONFERENCE

*Photo credits: Mantreh Atashband, Nikan Khatibi and Roshan Rivetna*



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## URGENCY OF PRESERVING OUR PRECIOUS MANUSCRIPTS AND BOOKS

When the sun set over the Sassanian empire, one of the most serious tragedies we suffered was the loss of a large portion of our invaluable literature. References to the original extent of this vast literature bears ample testimony to this tragic fact. Being aware of this great loss, it is our sacred duty to spare no efforts in preserving what little we have left. Hence, the FEZANA Journal has thought it necessary to request scholars to express their viewpoint on this crucial issue.

When I launched the World Zarathushti Cultural Foundation (WZCF) in 1998, one of the important projects undertaken was the setting up of libraries in other parts of India where the community had settled. I recall with trepidation, when on visiting the Library of Congress in Washington, I came to know that many decades back, there was a loss of about 30,000 volumes in this great treasure house due to fire. One of the lessons to be learnt from this catastrophe was to decentralize. Presently, our most important manuscripts and books are at the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute, Mumbai and at the first Dastur Meherjirana Library at Navsari. Hence, with this in mind, when WZCF received a large collection of about 1400 books on our religion, history and culture, from the late Ervad Hormuzdiar Pavri of Nagpur, I arranged to send it to Pune, as this city has the second largest Parsi population in the world. This collection has been preserved at the Albert Edward Institute and Cowasjee Dinshaw Hall and Library, Pune.

Later, another collection of about 400 books was presented to the Bangalore Parsi Anjuman, where the books have been catalogued and kept in the premises of the Agiary. In 2005, about 850 books were sent to the Baroda Parsi Punchayet. These books have been well preserved in the Late Fardoonji Cursetji Reading Room and Library. Other attempts at preservation of our literature through WZCF were to place few manuscripts of Dasturji Dr. Kaikhushroo JamaspAsa, on the CD-ROM. Besides this, about 50 important books on our religion, culture and history have also been placed on the CD-ROM. Another project, which I hope to launch, is digitization of our important books on history, culture and religion. Since many of these books are old and out of print, this project would make them easily accessible to one and all.

I wish to relate an incident, which cannot be avoided as it is connected to the matter of conservation. Being a researcher, I have been visiting the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute for my research. Over the years, I noticed that some of our important books and rare manuscripts needed urgent attention but were neglected. I wrote to the Trustees of the Institute in the matter. I then drew the attention of other scholars and high priests and a total consensus emerged about the urgency of preserving this heritage – we then decided to write a joint letter. One of the signatories was not only a renowned scholar but also a Trustee of the Cama Oriental Institute. We also suggested that at least some important works be put on the CD-ROM. I was chided for interfering with the affairs of the Institute. I am not one to needlessly make provocative statements. But I firmly believe that if one is working for a worthy cause, you have to stick your neck out and have a steely resolve. All this created a flutter but it also had the desired effect. Evidently, as things turned out, my role was that of a catalyst. But all this is history. Today, I am happy to state that very effective work is being carried out at the Cama Library in conservation of our precious manuscripts by the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH). An article by Mr. Anant Shelke & Mrs. Madhura Joshi Shelke explains the details of this project. It is, however, pertinent to point out that the Houses of Tata and Godrej had come forward to aid the conservation project of the renowned Asiatic Society Library in Mumbai which has a much larger collection of books and manuscripts than the Cama Oriental Institute.

Furthermore, it is also heartening to note that the conservation of our manuscripts at the First Dastur Meherjirana library at Navsari is also being undertaken by INTACH. An article by Dinyar Patel mentions in more about this.

Earlier this year, National Mission for Manuscripts (NMM) launched an online database with information about 1.8 lakh rare manuscripts. The website allows access to manuscripts that were kept in approximately 30,000 public and private collections across India including temples, monasteries, libraries, private homes etc. The database will provide information about various aspects of each manuscript. Besides this, 45 manuscripts from 21 different repositories across India have been declared as “Manuscript Treasures of India”. Unfortunately, both our above two libraries, which are the store-houses of very rare Avesta, Pahlavi, and Persian manuscripts have not participated in the NMM project. Let us hope that in future they take an active part in this undertaking so that scholars all over the world may be made aware of this valuable treasure.



Besides the articles mentioned above, Prof. Ketayoun Mazdapour and Mobedyar Mehran Ghaibi have given us insights about the work being done in Kerman. Moreover, Ervad Dr. Ramiyar Karanjia provides another valuable viewpoint. The various authors have given us their vision, and in doing so reemphasized the fact that conservation is a must. Hence, if these works have a wider circulation, it will undoubtedly lead to further research.

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*He has represented the Parsi community at various international conferences focusing on the Zoroastrian view of peace, ecology, human rights, inter religious dialogue, etc. Besides this, he has been very active in the interfaith movement both at the local as well as the international level. He is a member of the International Council of the International Association for Religious Freedom, Oxford. He has played a vital role in the formation of the organization entitled "Foundation for Unity of Religions and Enlightened Citizenship" which was launched by the President of India in 2004. For his contribution to the interfaith movement over two decades, he was awarded "The Mother Teresa National Award for Interfaith Harmony" at New Delhi on April 22, 2007.*

*In early 1998, he founded the World Zarathushti Cultural Foundation in Mumbai. As its President, he has launched a number of cultural projects for the Parsi community including the excavations at Sanjan and the preservation of the Bahrot caves. Due to the scarcity of the vultures at the Towers of Silence, he introduced the Solar Concentrator, which has once again strengthened the system of Dokhmenishini.*



## Methods of Preserving and Conserving the Manuscripts, Printed Books and Maps at K. R. Cama Oriental Institute and Library

The K. R. Cama Oriental Institute was founded in 1916 by the citizens of Bombay in memory of Khurshedji Cama, an oriental scholar and prominent citizen. Generous donations were given and the Institute was established as a free reading room and library, consisting of Cama's personal books and other collections.

The Institute's Library comprises of several private collections of some of the most distinguished scholars of the time. It is considered the main and most comprehensive source of information on Zoroastrianism. Part of the collection is 200 to 400 years old.

**EARLY ATTEMPTS TO PRESERVE BOOKS.** The institute has exerted every effort to preserve its collection by using tobacco leaves, DDT powder and Silica Gel but these strategies have proved to be ineffective. Every page in the library was sprayed with DDT some years back which kept the insects away but it also caused those who worked with the books to remain chronically ill. Hence the institute was keen to have a professional job of conservation done for their collection.

The first phase of conserving the rare manuscript, printed books and maps was undertaken by The Indian National Trust for Arts and Cultural Heritage, (INTACH) Indian Council of Conservation Institutes (ICCI), which started from July 2003 to August 2004. Ninety-five books and manuscripts, fourteen thousand folios including two extensively illustrated manuscripts "Shahnameh of Firdousi" and ten maps were conserved during this phase.

The aim of this project was to stabilize the books and manuscripts, and to remove all the harmful residues of DDT, as well as to prevent any further damage. It was important to make the collections accessible to research scholars whenever they were required in the future.



# Manuscripts

**DETERIORATION SEEN.** The problems of deterioration seen in the collection were high acidity, insect attack with holes and tunnels, the folios were brittle & fragile, use of iron gall ink which was charred, damaged bindings, use of verdigris (copper sulphate) in illustrated manuscripts, which had corroded and damaged the green areas in the illustrations.

Cockling and severe strain on the leaves when they were turned over was found in all manuscripts. These needed to be released and rebound in a more sympathetic way. The minimum intervention was carried out for the actual physical conservation, which concentrated on cleaning and removing all the DDT, old, and damaged previous repairs as the glue had discoloured the paper, deacidification of folios, lining and binding.

Besides this physical problem there was concern about manuscripts written with iron gall ink as signs of ink corrosion were visible in many folios. Another area of concern was the use of verdigris, old copper sulphate pigment as green colour in illustrated manuscripts "Shahnameh of Firdousi" which charred the area it was applied on.

**CORRECTING TREATMENT.** The correcting treatment used was to first do a detailed written documentation prior to treatment. It was not photo documented, as photography was not allowed. The pH was checked to see the level of acidity. Pagination was done. Solubility of ink was checked. Treatment was then decided according to the condition.

A low suction handy vacuum cleaner was used to remove the harmful DDT and dust. The torn and damaged binding had to be carefully removed without damaging the spine of the book. Folios were loosened. Deacidification treatment was given to neutralize the acidic contents. Those folios, which were in a better shape, were sized. Holes and tears were mended according to the thickness of folios with Japanese lens tissue and Nepalese banana tissue. Fragile and brittle folios were given lining with Japanese lens tissue with gluten free starch paste which contained fungicide and insecticide.

Folios damaged with iron gall ink were treated accordingly. The areas charred by verdigris pigment were given the support of Japanese lens tissue from the rear side. The losses were then reintegrated with watercolours to tone down the white of the tissue paper. Guarding of Nepalese banana tissue was given on the spine to extend the folio and make it easy for opening. Once the paper was repaired, the pages were re-assembled into gatherings in preparation for re-sewing. Section stitching and re-binding was done with acid free mounts to complete the treatment.

Maps also went through the same process of documenting and cleaning. They were given to us in rolled condition

with lots of folds and stains. They had to be humidified with cool fog until they were relaxed and straight. Stains were removed locally. Maps were lined with pure cotton muslin cloth to make them more flexible as they were to be stored in rolled condition. This project is still in progress and now is in its 4th phase.



**Mr. Anant Shelke & Mrs. Madhura Joshi Shelke,**  
Sr. Art Conservators, INTACH Art Conservation Centre,  
Mumbai [bdlmuseum@gmail.com](mailto:bdlmuseum@gmail.com)

*They have been trained at the International Training Course in Conservation of palm leaf and paper manuscripts from INTACH ICI OACC and in*

*Conservation and Restoration of Antiquities and Art Objects, from N.R.L.C. Lucknow.*

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## Manuscript tradition of Dron Yasht (Baj-dharna)

Er. Dr. Ramiyar Parvez Karanjia

<sup>1</sup>Dron Yasht, referred to as the Baj-dharna in India is an important and widely performed ritual by the Zarathushti priests. It is basically performed for consecration - an important theme in Zarathushtrian theology. It touches various aspects of a Zarathushti's life, and more importantly, all their religious institutions. The colloquial Parsi Gujarati verb often used presently for the performance of this ritual is *inju* to consecrate. Verbs used for the performance of other rituals are *karvu* "to perform" or *bhanvu* "to recite."

Although the Baj-dharna has been an extremely important and frequently performed ritual, its complete text has not been included in either of the composite editions of the Zarathushtrian texts: Zend Avesta - or the Religious book of the Zoroastrians by N.L. Westergaard (Copenhagen, 1852-54) or Avesta - The Sacred book of the Parsis by Karl F. Geldner (Stuttgart, 1896) in spite of there being an independent manuscript tradition of the Baj-dharna. Though five of the twenty eight manuscripts consulted by Geldner (K 17, K 38, Kh2, Lb5 and Mf3) contained the Dron Yasht, he did not consider it for inclusion in his edition. This may be due to the fact that much of the Avestan text of the Baj-dharna is taken from the Yasna. Westergaard came across only one manuscript - K 17 - containing the Dron Yasht.

Most manuscripts contain ritual instructions, along with the text for recitation. Originally these instructions were written in Pahlavi, but later Persian and Old Gujarati were used.

The manuscripts for the ritual and text of Baj-dharna are fewer in comparison to manuscripts of other Avestan texts. This was perhaps due to the fact that the Baj-dharna being a comparatively shorter ritual, and one very frequently performed, was expected to be memorised and not considered necessary to be written down. Another reason may be that, since the Baj-dharna did not have an exclusive text of its own (its text is borrowed from the Yasna with alterations), a need may not have been perceived to record it.

Oriental Treasures by J.C. Katrak (Bombay, 1941), a catalogue of manuscripts in and around the villages of Gujarat and Bombay reveal an interesting pattern regarding manuscripts of Baj-dharna in India in the 1930s. Of the eight hundred and thirty manuscripts listed in the book, only twenty four (less than 3%) deal wholly or partly with the Baj-dharna. The oldest of these dates back to 1673 C.E. and has the text in Avestan script, and ritual instructions in Old Gujarati.

The next manuscript in chronology is dated 1747.CE. After that, only five manuscripts of the Baj-dharna are recorded between the periods 1750 to 1800, and 1850 to 1900. The period between 1800 and 1850 has only one manuscript. The other eleven manuscripts are either undated or their dates are missing. Of the twenty-four manuscripts listed in this book, four are with Khordeh Avesta and Afringans, one is with the explanation of the ritual of Nerangden, and the rest are dedicated exclusively to Baj-dharna.

Among the manuscripts mentioned by various authors in their work, seven have been traced and identified, the oldest dating 1699 CE. Of these, four are from India and three from Iran. They are:

1. D 23 Khorde Avesta (Irani) and Darun Yasht with Fravashi, 1699 CE.
2. R110 Waz Yashtan (folios 355), 1757 CE.
3. J4 Baj Ceremony Avesta, 1822 CE.
4. D-6 Baj-dharna or Darun Yasht, about 1810 CE.
5. K 38 (M3 of Westergaard), Iranian Khorda Avesta (folios 108), 1814 CE.
6. K17 Khorde Avesta (folios 209), 1682 CE.
7. Lb5 Khorde Avesta with Frawarden Yasht, Undated (modern)

Three manuscripts of the text of the Baj-dharna have been referred by Geldner and Unvala, but were not traced. They are:

1. M50 - Frawarden Yasht with Baj-dharna, 1721 CE.
2. M69 - Baj-dharna of Ardafravash, c. 1840 CE.
3. Mf3 - Iranian Khorde Avesta - Afringan Dahman, Darun Yasht (Gld, p.xi).

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He is the Principal of Athornan Madressa (Seminary for Zoroastrian priests), Dadar, and Sir J. J. Z. and Mullan Feroze Madressas (Institute for Indo-Iranian Studies). He is a Lecturer in Avesta-Pahlavi. He gives talks all over the world on Zarathushtri religion and Iranian history to children, youths and adults.

<sup>1</sup>The most important religious institutions of the Zoroastrians are the sacred fire temples and the Dakhma (Tower of Silence), both of which need to be consecrated before usage.

<sup>2</sup>The other verb used for the Baj-dharna ritual is *dharvu* "to hold."



## NAMING OF THE MANUSCRIPTS

### Abbreviations used to describe Zarathushti manuscripts

Er. Dr. Ramiyar Parvez Karanjia

Zarathushti priests in Iran and India were engaged in learning, recording and transmitting the sacred religious books throughout the history of the Zarathushtrian religion. These hand written books are known as Manuscripts. They are now considered precious literary treasures. Presently we have manuscripts since the 13th century CE., which have been preserved in private and public libraries in India and Europe.

There is an international standard of naming the manuscripts generally on the basis of their owners. These can be individuals or libraries. Some of the well known abbreviations used to describe Zarathushtrian manuscripts are:

DM: Manuscripts belonging to Dastur Mulla Firoz

DP: Manuscripts belonging to Darab Peshotan Sanjana

EMU: Manuscripts belonging to Ervad Maneckji Unvala

J: Manuscripts belonging to Jamaspji Jamasp Asa

HJ: Manuscripts belonging to Hoshang Jamasp

K: Manuscripts housed in the University Library of Copenhagen

L : Manuscripts housed in the India Office Library, London

Lb Manuscripts housed in the Bodleian Library, Oxford,

M: Manuscripts housed in the Staatsbibliothek, Munich,

MH: Manuscripts belonging to Martin Haug

MK: Manuscripts written by Meherwan Kaikhusro

Mf: K: Manuscripts housed in the Mulla Firoze Library in Mumbai

Pt: Manuscripts belonging to Peshotan Behramji Sanjana

TD: Manuscripts belonging to Tehmurasp Dinshah Anklesaria

If an individual or library has more than one manuscript, numerals are placed after the abbreviation. Thus DM 1, Mf 5 etc.

At present, apart from some private collections, Zarathushtrian manuscripts written by Parsi priests are preserved mainly in the following libraries

1. The Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris,
2. The Staatsbibliothek, Munich,
3. The India Office Library, London,
4. The British Museum, London,
5. The Bodleian Library, Oxford,
6. The University Library, Copenhagen,
7. The University Library, Cambridge,
9. The University Library, Florence.

10. The K. R. Cama Oriental Institute, Bombay,

11. The First Dastur Meherji Rana Library, Navsari,

12. Dastur Kayoji Mirza Institute, Udvada.

Apart from catalogues of Libraries, one can refer to the following books for more information on Manuscripts:

1. Collection of Colophon of Manuscripts bearing on Zoroastrianism in some Libraries of Europe, Jamshedji Unvala, Bombay, 1940.
2. Oriental Treasures, J. C. Katrak, Bombay 1941.
3. Outlines of Parsi History, Hormazdyar Kayoji Mirza, Bombay, 1987.

### Zarathushtra has been spelt differently throughout the ages in different languages

***Zarathushtra: The authentic form of the name of the prophet occurs in his songs the Gathas (Old Avesta) as well as in Young Avesta***

In Manichean Parthian: **Zrhwsht**

Manichaen Sogdian: **Zrwshch**

Mazdean Sogdian: **Z(a)rushch**

Manichaen Uighur: **Zrwshch**

Chinese: **Suo-luo-ch-je** (see Bailey, 1953, p 40, n6)

In Book Pahlavi and Middle Persian inscriptions, the name occurs as: **Zltw(h)st and Zaraduxsht**

In New Persian: **Zartusht, Zardusht, Zartusht**

Syrian: **Zardusht**

Aramaic: **Zrtshtsrsh**

Sanskrit (as found in Neriyaosangh's translation of the Avesta): **Jarathust.**

Byzantine Greek: **Zarathouste**

Standard Greek: **Zoroastres**

Armanian: **Zaradasht**

Latin: **Zarastus**

Parsi Gujarati: **Jarthosht (saheb)**

***Pallan Ichaporia Ph.D***

***Chair, FEZANA Committee on Manuscripts Preservation***

***From an e.mail on fezanayahoogroups.com***



# Manuscripts

## Antiquity in our Hands: Digitization of Ancient Zarathushti Manuscripts and Texts

Today from my desktop, I can learn in leaps and bounds about so many of the world's intriguing peoples. I can read about, or from, the people of Wales or Bolivia. Or watch a man enjoy golfing across Mongolia ([www.golfmongolia.com](http://www.golfmongolia.com)). An individual newly connects with billions.

In appreciating the Vision of Zarathushtra as a universal one for all humankind, digitization offers a bright prospect (even so if we are more exclusive). We have new opportunities for placing our vibrant cultural patrimony into humanity's historical record.

This gives people new access to our texts. Sites such as Achemenet ([www.achemenet.com](http://www.achemenet.com)), or CZC Publications ([www.czcjournal.org](http://www.czcjournal.org)) offer material such as the Gathas manuscript, 'J2'.

With this new connectedness one asks, what economic structures best facilitate possibilities? Ben Franklin also puzzled this in his design of clever publishing infrastructure (Frasca, Ralph, "Benjamin Franklin's Printing Network, Disseminating Virtue in Early America", University of Missouri Press, 2006). What infrastructure today supports digitization?

### STRONG BUSINESS MODEL INFRASTRUCTURE

Economies of the information age change earlier structures. Dispersal of 'digitized' information does not depend upon presuppositions from earlier publishing environments. Ask a local newspaper publisher about print-based publication competing with digital publication business models (Joel Achenbach amuses, "I Really Need You to Read This Article, Okay"? The Washington Post, August 19, 2007). Overseas, I observed that even eminent publishers cannot protect intellectual property from counterfeit publication.

Some advocate patronage or "intellectual-commons" schemes of information preservation and exchange. Privatized scenarios, though, can do a good job to steward heritage and information. Privatization is helpful in maintaining accountability, efficiencies, and a position at research frontiers. As well as textual material, beautiful art and aesthetics is stewarded in for-profit initiative.

We even see our DNA, genetic information, stewarded by the private sector: Avestha Gengraine Technologies Pvt. Ltd., Avesthagen, hopes to explore our DNA to good effect. Youth entrepreneurship, through WZCC,

the World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce, and start-up enablers can advance digitization. Effective business models for digital publication in varying media should be a focus of concern. Not least in shaping digitization infrastructure is concern with scientific advance.

### THE SCIENTIFIC FRONTIER

Perhaps there is no other time when the pace of change is faster than in the information age. New technologies involved in digitizing information are at a frontier of this rapid change. To modernize information resources requires anticipating the scientific frontier and developing flexible capacities to move ahead as the frontier changes.

At all steps in traditional publication, new science and technologies come into play. We create text electronically versus with handwriting or typing. We use electronic environments, typographical and page layout software, to design text. Tools organizing information, word-processing outlines and markup languages, structure text. Algorithms and statistical tools analyze text. Instead of typesetting with molten lead, we prepare text in digital pre-press processes.

Fundamental innovation occurs with printing itself, from printing machines, to technologies for inks and papers. We make "paper" structures from nano-scale diamond materials, "quantum-dot" inks and biodegradable microscopic printer-heads. Staying on the cutting edge of science is crucial for doing the best with our antiquated texts.

A recent example demonstrates the care needed. Scientists at Stanford's Synchrotron Radiation Laboratory discovered a lost manuscript from the brilliant ancient mathematician, Archimedes ("Imaging techniques, Reading the invisible", The Economist, July 20, 2006). The text had actually been effaced and its paper was used for other writing on top of Archimedes' words. Scientists were able to use new X-ray fluorescence imaging technology to read the effaced text. Without careful attunement to literary and scientific value from antiquity, a priceless manuscript would have been lost.

Epistemology, the study and nature of Knowledge, matters here. How the information age shapes knowledge requires considered, professional treatment. Fuller discussion raises the topic of textual meta-structure and the need for an XML (extensible Markup Language) standard for Gathic text. Fruits of this brilliant age, digital manuscripts, are available to each person, for their Vohuman (Good Mind) to lead towards Truth and Beauty.



Copyright, Natalie Vania, Fall 2007

Dr. Natalie Vania Gandhi, Wife of Rusi Gandhi

Philosopher, Entrepreneur and Founder of Arshiya Ventures



## Digital Preservation of Texts

Joseph H. Peterson

### WHAT IS DIGITAL PRESERVATION.

Digital preservation is the saving of data in digital form for computer access. Data can include photographs, encoded text, and even audio recordings. Of all the methods of manuscript preservation used through the ages, digital preservation has many advantages:

- The original text no longer needs to be handled as much, thereby saving wear and tear
- Digital images are easy to share and can be reprocessed for a wide variety of uses (such as printing, computer display, searching, and computer analysis techniques)
- Relatively cheap and convenient storage. A digital library takes a fraction of the space of the original documents
- Increased dissemination opportunities, especially given the popularity of search engines
- Long-term access to digital information without deterioration due to acid content of paper and ink, pests, fire, scratching on microfilm, etc.

Texts can be preserved indefinitely in digital form, assuming basic backup/recovery and fixity practices are followed. However, long-term usability of the digital information raises a number of issues. Primarily, data formats and storage media become obsolete quickly. When I first began to assemble texts digitally, I used 1970's era Displaywriter technology and magnetic tapes. Since then the same data has been transformed many times into newer data formats, including ASCII, GML, SGML, HTML, and others. It has also been kept on different types of media, including digital cassette tapes and 8" floppy disks of the 1970's, up to DVD and flash drives today. I still find myself converting textual and image data to newer formats, and don't expect the need for that will disappear as newer, better technology comes on the market.

**BENEFITS** As mentioned above, a major benefit of digital preservation is that access to photographs can reduce the amount of further handling an original text gets. The more handling of course, the faster a text deteriorates. A good photograph taken today may be worth far more than the original text tomorrow. I have microfilms of manuscripts that were photographed in the 1970's, and again in the 1990's, and was horrified to see how far the originals had deteriorated during that time. Some of Geldner's best Avesta manuscripts have now almost completely turned to dust. Scholars would love to have good quality photographs of the texts as they had seen them, because some of his readings are impossible to verify anymore.

Utilizing and converting digital data is relatively easy, compared with capturing the data in the first place. Best practices in this field have had to evolve rapidly. It may be a big challenge to anticipate future developments to ensure long-term usability of the digital information. Fortunately, there are many people working to address the burgeoning needs of data handling these days. Unfortunately, more than once I have found myself re-photographing a text because the original scans were not of high enough resolution the first time. This is very time consuming, and of course puts more strain on the original text.

Books as low as 150 dpi (dots per inch) can sometimes be quite readable, if the original is in good condition. 300 dpi will usually print an acceptable copy, and on-demand printers usually request 300 dpi artwork. However if you try to magnify a 300 dpi image very much, it will have noticeably rough edges, especially when choosing to digitally compress the images.

### CURRENT BEST PRACTICES.

Assuming the decision has been made that the text is worth preserving, any text can be digitally imaged. The best

method depends on the condition of the original. For those that are too fragile to place on a photocopy machine or flat-bed scanner, many research libraries now have the facilities to do overhead photographs or scans, making it very gentle on fragile material. Charges range widely (from 15 cents to 15 dollars a page), so it is worthwhile to shop around a bit. Scientists have recently developed special x-ray technology, which has allowed them to read ancient texts that are too fragile to even open.

From my experience, and from surveying a number of sites that have documented standards, the best practice is to photograph or scan documents at 1200 dpi and preserve the data in TIFF format with no compression. Those original images can then be used to create lower resolution, compressed images for a variety of other purposes, including JPEG images for Internet display, printing, or enhancing for artwork.

Higher resolution photographs of course will result in larger files, which will take longer to download or display. Low cost disk storage and availability of better networking makes this much less of an issue than it was even five years ago. You can improve web download times by selecting the option to "Optimize for Web graphics." Displaying an image on a computer screen is totally different than viewing on paper due to the differences in the light sources involved with each. For printing I like to sharpen the contrast and increase the brightness of raw images.

Another issue that digital preservation raises is data encoding. In addition to the raw photographs of the original text, there is usually machine-readable information about a text. This includes the physical description, location, cataloging information, and can include complete transcriptions.

Simply cataloguing the detailed description of the text is immensely helpful to researchers. Even well



# Manuscripts

funded researchers have limited time to visit remote archives, so understanding as much as possible about a rare manuscript is extremely valuable. I have many times spent years hunting down available copies of rare and valuable books, only to find one that was too fragile to photocopy. This was the case with Kanga's Practical Grammar of the Avesta Language. After looking for many years, I was finally able to borrow a copy from the University of Pennsylvania, but I was dismayed to find that it was too fragile to copy. In a happy epilog, Soli Dastur scanned his personal copy and it is now available free to anyone at my website ([www.avesta.org](http://www.avesta.org)).

For many digital books, optical code recognition (OCR) technology can produce very accurate transcripts automatically for some languages, allowing researchers to find information quickly and accurately. This raises another issue, namely that encoding and spelling conventions have also evolved. This is particularly acute in Zarathushti religion, which has spanned so many centuries, languages, and cultures. Even the most basic religious terms have no fixed English spelling, for example farohar (variations include frohar, fravard, fravahr, Av. 'fravashi') and noruz (var. naoruz, norouz, navroz). By studying search statistics for [avesta.org](http://avesta.org) it is apparent that many people give up after trying only one spelling, and never find the information at their fingertips. Professional librarians and researchers develop knacks for searching techniques, but most users are not so savvy. For [avesta.org](http://avesta.org), I have tried to improve the situation by consistently using the spellings found in *Kotwal and Boyd, A Guide to the Zoroastrian Religion* (Scholars Press, 1982). I also include a list of alternate spellings in a glossary, which is accessible via the search engines, to alert users that their variant spellings of these problematic words do appear in more standardized usage on the website.

Unfortunately, text recognition technology is currently mostly limited

to a subset of languages and then only for printed texts as opposed to manuscripts. For Avestan, Pahlavi, Pazand, and Old Persian, there are several methods used for encoding the text digitally.

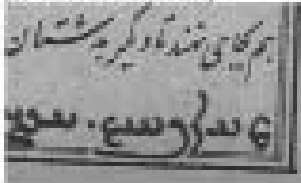
Having text in digital form is extremely useful for a variety of purposes. I originally created my core digital texts for my personal use, so I could search for passages of interest, create lexical aids (such as high-frequency word lists for learning Avestan), and print prayer texts. I still find these useful, for example, when valuable photographs of a newly discovered Avesta manuscript were posted to



Samples showing effect of scan settings on image quality and size

## Samples showing effect of scan settings on image quality and size

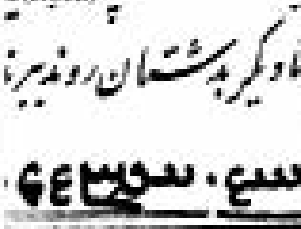
1200 dpi, 24-bit color, 93-MBytes  
(17x11 in. at standard 600)



300 dpi, gray, 3-MBytes (145/CD) Magnified to see detail



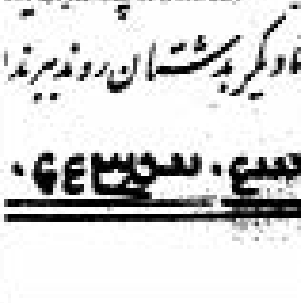
180 dpi, gray, enhanced for web, 1.170  
M (218/CD)



180 dpi, gray, 1.1-MBytes (218/CD)



300 dpi, color, 224K (186/CD)



300 dpi, compressed, 1533K (149/CD)



**Joe Peterson** is a senior engineer for a major computer technology and consulting corporation. He has translated many religious and esoteric texts, and contributed articles on Zoroastrianism to *Scriptures of the World's Religions* (1998) and *Document-Based Questions* (World History/Ancient Civilizations, 2006). Joe is an active member of the American Academy of Religion and the American Folklore Society. He has been collecting rare documents on Zoroastrianism, which he shares at his award-winning website [avesta.org](http://avesta.org). He lives in Kasson Minnesota.

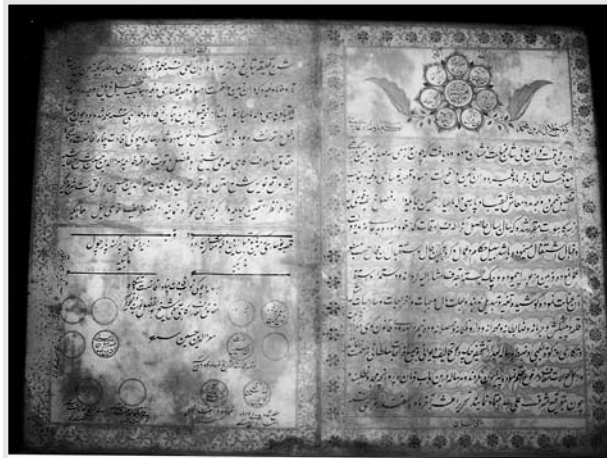




## Meherjirana Library

Dinyar Patel

When she first visited the Meherjirana Library, Dr. Shernaz Cama, director of the UNESCO-assisted Parsi Zoroastrian Project (Parzor), noticed a large picture hanging on the wall completely covered in dust. Curious, she turned to her host, the sixteenth Dasturji Meherjirana, (below) who replied that it was “given by Akbar badshah to my ancestor, the first Dasturji Meherjirana of the Ibadat Khana.” Dr. Cama climbed up and dusted the frame with her dupatta. Before her was a huge sanad (grant or charter) with the blue and gold seal of the Mughal Emperor Akbar and signatures from court officials. (photo above)



when the priest supposedly rid the court of black magic. Upon his return to Navsari, Parsis awarded the dastur with a hereditary priesthood. Subsequent generations of Meherjiranas diligently collected documents related to the Zarathushti religion and transcribed many other important texts. In 1872, the extensive collections of Dasturji Erachji Meherjirana were finally given a permanent home in the form of the library.

### TREASURES AT THE LIBRARY.

The collections at the library constitute a largely undiscovered treasure for scholars of religion, culture, and history. The library's holding of Zarathushti manuscripts and commentaries in Avesta, Pahlavi, Pazand, and Gujarati is probably the largest in the world and, therefore, of vital importance to priests. Other documents hint at the complex Indo-Persian heritage of the Parsis: couplets on the Yasna in Farsi, Gujarati monajats used to explain meanings of the prayers, and various editions of the Kisseh-i-Sanjan and the Shahnameh. Also included is a transcribed copy of the sixteen Sanskrit slokas presented to Raja Jadi Rana after the Parsis reached the shores of Gujarat.

Browsing through the library allows one to peel back history and expose a variety of traditions long forgotten by today's Parsis. Here are children's stories (hekat-i latif) based on events of the Persian Empire; nirangs to drive away evil, ward off sickness, and bring rainfall; treatises on astronomy, geomancy, the interpretation of dreams, and astrology; and the rivayats, the communications of learned priests from Iran and India which ensured the survival of much knowledge otherwise being destroyed by fanatical Muslim Iranian authorities. The collections also reveal the broad-mindedness of the Meherjiranas: they collected Arabic treatises on physics, a Bible translated into Farsi, histories of Islam, and the music of Tansen.

**DISINTEGRATION OF THE LIBRARY.** The Meherjirana family did its best to preserve this trove of material; however, the lack of adequate human and financial resources took their toll over the decades. When Parzor arrived, stacks of manuscripts lined the windowsills and floors, sprayed with DDT powder to keep the termites away. The library's wooden structure was dangerously unprepared in case of fire. And, in spite of their tireless dedication, the family and the librarian—Mrs. Bharati Gandhi—could not fight against the decay and damage of materials caused by the tropical climate.

**PARZOR STEPS IN.** Parzor began by thinking of ways to best preserve the library's documents for future generations. With the assistance of technical experts from Mumbai, it started to catalogue and microfilm the most important documents. To date, over 90,000 pages have been

For Dr. Cama and Parzor, it was the first of many great finds at the library. The Meherjirana Library, situated in Navsari, houses a priceless collection of manuscripts, documents, and records of critical importance in understanding the Parsis, the Zarathushti deen, and Indian and Iranian history. Priests, as well as scholars from around the world, have relied on this material in order to craft many of the seminal modern works on the religion and community. By the time Parzor visited in 1999, the library had fallen into serious disrepair. Unknown to many Parsis, an irreplaceable component of their heritage and history was in danger of being lost.

### MUGHAL EMPEROR AKHBAR AND DASTUR MEHERJIRANA.

The library, which occupies land originally deeded to the Meherjiranas by Akbar in 1578, is in many ways the product of an amazing relationship that developed between the family and the Mughal court. While consolidating his empire in



Gujarat, Akbar met the first Dastur Meherjirana and, impressed by his wisdom and the Parsis' links to Iran (which was also the cultural “homeland” of the Mughals), invited him back to his capital at Fatehpur Sikri. There, amongst the grand sandstone palaces that constituted the center of Mughal power, he joined the Ibadat Khana, a council of religious leaders from various faiths that helped Akbar develop his syncretic, tolerant beliefs. **The dastur invested Akbar with the sudrah and kusti and installed a sacred fire at court. Akbar was so taken with the Zarathushti deen that he observed various jashans and declared jashan days as public holidays.**

Dasturji Meherjirana's fame grew at Fatehpur Sikri and he became the subject of a khyal, or song, by Tansen, a noted musician of the Mughal era, who recorded an instance



# Manuscripts

microfilmed. The library trustees were insistent that none of the collections leave Navsari, so all microfilming was done on-site. Parzor has also outfitted the library with fire extinguishers, installed air-conditioning, completed a



catalogue of manuscripts (available online on Parzor's website) and introduced the library to Zarathushti scholars worldwide.

Parzor's efforts have reaped some major rewards. The

Meherjirana Library has recently hosted academics from England, Germany, Spain, and Japan. In 2003, after volunteers discovered the letters of Akbar's prime minister, Abul Fazl, amongst the brittle and fragile manuscripts, BBC News carried an article on the library. Dr. Alberto Cantera, a Spanish scholar who directs the Videvdad Project and sits on the board of the Societas Iranologica Europea, has stated that Parzor's restoration and microfilming work represents "a spectacular development for Zoroastrian studies." Parzor



has also been contacted by other world-renowned experts on preservation who are interested in helping the organization and the library.

**MUCH WORK REMAINS TO BE DONE.** Parzor's current priority is the preservation of original documents and manuscripts, many of which are in serious danger of disintegrating beyond repair. The organization has had difficulty raising funds to pay the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) for the necessary restoration work. Parzor requires assistance in preserving the current library building as well as constructing an annex, where the library's over-supply of stored books can finally be made available to visitors. Dr. Cama would like to set up an account for unforeseen expenses and travel expenditures, since Parzor volunteers currently pay for their travel to Navsari out of their own pocket. Finally, Parzor envisions a separate fund specifically for the library's staff, who currently earn trifling



salaries despite their dedication and commitment. (photo left below: 16th Dastur Meherjirana, Cyrus Patel of Microdata, Dr. Shernaz Cama, and Bharati Gandhi, librarian)

Dr. Cama is confident that Parzor's investment will go a long way to help the Parsi community reconnect with its heritage. In her last meeting with Mary Boyce, the famed scholar of Zoroastrianism told her that "if you succeed in looking after the Meherjirana Library and bringing it to world notice, that alone is enough to prove Parzor's work and worth."

*If you are interested in helping preserve the Meherjirana Library, please see Parzor's website at <http://www.unescoparzor.com/project/meherji.htm> or contact Dr. Shernaz Cama (+ 91 011-26114794; [shernazcama@hotmail.com](mailto:shernazcama@hotmail.com)).*

*Dinyar Patel is a first-year Ph.D. candidate in History at Harvard University. He is hoping to work on a topic related to Parsi involvement in the Indian nationalist movement. In order to become a legitimately poor graduate student, he blew most of his savings on a round-the-world trip to the Middle East, Russia, China, Tibet, Nepal, and India before beginning at Harvard. In the Middle East, Russia, and even Mongolia he was able to trace many Zarathushti and ancient Persian links.*



<sup>1</sup> For more information on Dasturji Meherjirana at Akbar's court, see Piloo Nanavutty's *The Parsis* (pages 47 and 48), published by the National Book Trust, India.

*Photos courtesy Parzor and Roshan Rivetna during her visit to Navsari in 2003.*



# Manuscripts

## THE DASTUR DHALLA COLLECTION TRUST

# @ZAH Library

Manuscripts are unique and fragile things, which are still far from being protected as art of a heritage, despite the fact they are the focus of widespread interest. Although their importance may be acknowledged, the resources allocated to safeguard them are in many cases slender.

The literary, scientific, social and political history of a people can only be written if it is based on the original sources, and those sources are mainly found in manuscripts or archival documents. Manuscripts are the lifeblood of history. Their value is impossible to calculate, and even if it is perceived as relatively slight in the world context, within each culture it is absolute.

Libraries have long understood the importance of this heritage, especially since manuscripts constitute natural additions to their holdings, and their mission is to acquire, preserve and provide access to printed works.



The Zoroastrian Association of Houston Library maintains the tradition of historical preservation and is privileged to be the recipient of the Dastur M. N. Dhalla Memorabilia Trust. Initiated by Arnaz Marker and instituted by Karen and Sharokh Marker of Florida in 2000, the Library received many articles of Dastur Dhalla's personal possessions. These memorabilia include silver caskets, scrolls from various anjumans and punchayats, keys to the city, trophies and his PH. D degree from Columbia University. A permanent display case (photo left) was gifted to the library by several other members, grandchildren and great grand children of the Dhalla family --- Vahishta and Jambhi Canteenwalla of Montreal, Noshir and Golmohr Cantel of UK, Farrokh Dhalla of UK, and the family of Pouruchisti and Jamshed and Xerxes Bharucha of Karachi. Items and memorabilia continue to be received and are placed on display on a rotation basis.

To honor Dastur Dhalla, ZAH Library held a gala "An Evening of Treasures, Traditions, & Tributes" October 2004. The program featured a play, "A Legend" written by Houston member Shahnaz Sidhwa, was on the life of Dhalla adapted from the book, *Saga of a Soul*. Members of the Dhalla family as well as friends flew to Houston to attend the function. Built in 2000 with a generous donation from Shahnaz and Yazdi Sidhwa, the library is an integral part of the Zarathushti Heritage and Cultural Center in Houston, Texas. The multipurpose room was designed by award winning architect Darayus Kolah, and it is used for meetings, lectures and





# Manuscripts

Sunday school studies. (photo pg 29 with teachers Arnavaz Sethna and Vahishta Kaikobad in background)

In the library one can find a collection of rare books as well as Zarathushti religious and historical texts. Along with scholarly works it also houses fiction and non-fiction written by or about Zarathushtis. The collection is now at 700 books, audiovisual items and artifacts, all cataloged by a professional librarian and listed on the ZAH website. In addition to print media, the library has high-tech equipment for multi-media presentations.



Since its official opening in October 2003, the library has also been committed to providing a forum for learning and the exchange of ideas. A library committee meets the first Sunday of each month to plan the activities and events for the year. Events have included workshops, movies and book readings by several authors, including Bapsi Sidhwa, Sohrab Fracis and Boman Desai. Other presentations have been by author Ken Vincent who gave a multi-media presentation entitled "The History of the Magi from early Christian Art to Modern Christmas Cards", Mary Ann Bruni who shared her 20 year research findings of the Yezidis in Kurdistan, Cyrus Rivetna's "History of the Fire Temples", Malcolm Deboo and the manuscript Yasna 1780 and Jimmy Engineer, Pakistan's Artist and Humanitarian.



Last year the Library hosted a three-day seminar on Zarathushti history by renowned historian, Dr. Rashna Writer from London. This year author Paul Kriwaczek was featured and the event's write up is on page 63. The library has sponsored essay competition, *How the principles embodied in the Amesha Spentas may be used to address current world problems*. The winner of the essay, Naomi Bhappu, receives free registration, boarding and airfare to attend the 4th World Youth Congress to be held in Australia in December 2007.

ZAH Library serves as a leading repository of knowledge that fosters the awareness and study of Zarathushtrian religion, history and culture while serving the needs of a contemporary civilization. It also networks with other groups in Houston, including interfaith groups, the Asia Society, and the Rothko Chapel.

*Aban Rustomji a professional librarian is the Chair of the*

*Library Committee, Houston, TX*

*Photo credits, Jimmy Dholoo and Meheryar Rivetna*

## Beautiful Investment Property for Sale in Lonavala (near Pune)

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The beautiful stone house for sale (w/ a/cs in all rooms + fully furnished) away from the bustle, in natural surroundings, w/ a view of the hills. The main house of 6,000 sq. ft has exclusive furniture, an indoor gym + some very special features-- picture windows etc. The garden (plot size 36,000 sq.ft.) is beautifully landscaped w/ a fountain, swings, tennis court, lovely relaxing sit-outs, a gazebo etc. Has construction rights for 5 other bungalows (of 6,000 sq ft each), or can be kept as one plot.

**For further information, details and photographs, please contact Dr. Zareen Karani Araoz: [zareen@managingcultures.com](mailto:zareen@managingcultures.com) or call 617-852-1055**



## Historical Manuscripts: Illumining the Unknown

**F**or a lay observer standing before the Pyramids of Egypt, the ruins of Persepolis or Machu Pichu the sense of awe, mystery and grandeur is obvious.

One does not have to be a scholar historian to be able to fathom or realize the value and importance of what is manifest or the necessity of preserving it for future generations. That same sense of mystique, grandeur and mystery is perhaps not so evident to the lay individual when viewing a historical manuscript. The visual majesty is absent, but the necessity to preserve the manuscript is as important and as compelling as it is to preserve the monument simply for the fact that they both reveal to us a tremendous amount of information about the past.

Much has been said and printed about the necessity of preserving historical documents and manuscripts and a vast amount of discussion has occurred with regard to what constitutes a historical document as opposed to some other type of document. This article will seek to highlight in brief the history of discovery and the importance of two ancient historical sets of documents namely the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Dunhuang Manuscript collection and the light of revelation that historical documents shine on lost or hitherto known areas of the past.

excavations in the area during the same period also uncovered a habitation close to the caves at Wadi Qumran. It has been proposed by scholars that the scrolls comprised the library of the community at Qumran, which was hidden away in the caves to secure it during a period of turmoil. Based on palaeographic and linguistic evidence, as well as on Carbon-14 dating, scholars and scientists determined that the scrolls and the Qumran habitation dated from around 200 BCE to 100 CE. In all, scholars have determined from examining and assembling the fragments, that there were about 870 separate scrolls. Stemming as they did from the late Second Temple period the scrolls were the oldest surviving Hebrew manuscripts, predating other surviving manuscripts by almost a thousand years. (Photo pg 32 A close up of the entrance to the Qumran cave where the largest collection of the dead sea scroll manuscripts and fragments were found. Courtesy of BiblePlaces.com)

Scholars knew and understood that the importance of the Dead Sea Scrolls lay not in some mysterious pseudo connection to Jesus of Nazareth but in the fact that they had relevance for three main areas; the Hebrew Bible, the world of Second Temple Judaism, and early Christian origins.



**THE HEBREW BIBLE** The earliest extant copies of the Hebrew Bible, prior to the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, dated back to around 1000 CE. With the dating of the scrolls to the period between 200 BCE and 100 CE, it pushed the dating of extant copies of the Hebrew Bible back by a thousand years. The biblical manuscripts from Qumran also provide evidence of the rich variety of textual tradition that existed around the beginning of the first millennium CE and show that there was no official canon of books that existed in Judaism at this time. Additionally, the

variety in the texts gives pause to the reasoning held by some scholars that variations in later extant version of the Hebrew Bible, such as the Septuagint, were due to errors and inaccuracies in the process of translation. In many cases, they turned out to be accurate translations of variant traditions in different Hebrew originals.

“Whereas before the discovery of the Qumran scrolls scholars divided Jews into Pharisees and Sadducees, now it is clear that there were many more groups and movements in Second Temple Judaism: Pharisees, Sadducees (perhaps several kinds), Essenes, Samaritans, Zealots, Christians, and probably many more. These discoveries in turn inspired a restudy of the so-called Old Testament Pseudepigrapha and a

**DEAD SEA SCROLLS** In 1947 Bedouin shepherds of the Taamireh tribe claimed that while searching for stray goats from their flock in the Judean Desert, close to the northwest end of the Dead Sea, they entered a narrow cave and came upon jars filled with ancient scrolls. The Bedouins initially discovered seven scrolls which they split up into two lots. They sold one lot of four to the Syrian Orthodox Archbishop of Jerusalem, Athanasius Samuel, and the second lot of three to E.Y. Sukenik, a scholar at the Hebrew University. The discovery of these scrolls spurred a decade long search that resulted in the unearthing of thousands of scroll fragments (photo above) from eleven different caves. Archaeological



In a cliff wall near the city there are almost 500 caves or grottoes that have been cut into the rock face from around the fourth century BCE onwards and contain numerous religious carvings and frescoes. The secret library of manuscripts was discovered by the Daoist monk Wang Yuanlu, in 1900. He discovered it in a cave that was sealed up around the eleventh century CE, probably in response to an invasion in the area during that period. Wang Yuanlu encountered Stein in 1907 and sold him a large trove of manuscripts and paintings.

thoroughgoing reassessment of the sociological map of Second Temple Judaism. It is now clear that Judaism not only in the Diaspora but also in the land of Israel was open to Greek influences from the third century B.C.E. onward in the areas of language, economics, military strategy, politics, culture and even religion. Scraps of ancient Greek biblical texts were found at Qumran, and a first-century C.E. scroll of the Twelve Minor Prophets in Greek was discovered at nearby Nahal Hever. Even Jews as isolated as the Qumran people and their neighbors near the Dead Sea were affected to some extent by Hellenism.”

“The real significance of the Dead Sea Scrolls for Christian origins is that they fill out and enrich our understanding of the Jewish world in which Jesus and the early Christians lived. The closest parallel between the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Christian Scriptures occur in theological language, eschatological consciousness, and community organization. For both groups the Hebrew Bible was the major source of theological words and concepts....and theological creativity consisted in using old terms in new ways and new contexts... both groups viewed themselves as living in the “last days.” They saw the present as a struggle between light and darkness that would soon end with definitive divine intervention. Both operated out of a schema of modified dualism.... Despite (or perhaps because of) their convictions about the imminent intervention of God and the coming of God’s kingdom, both groups placed great emphasis on community structures.” While there are other surface similarities such as ritual cleansing and common meals, the primary difference of course is the centrality accorded to Jesus of Nazareth in the Christian scheme of things.

**THE DUNGUANG MANUSCRIPT COLLECTION** was brought to the attention of the modern world by British archeologist and explorer Aurel Stein in 1907. The manuscript collection of approximately 40,000 books and documents was hidden in a cave, one of the “Caves of a Thousand Buddhas” near the city of Dunhuang in China.

## **THE ASHEM VOHU PRAYER IN SOGDIAN** For Zarathushtis, what is of particular interest with

regards to this trove of manuscripts is the discovery of a particular Sogdian manuscript fragment among the collection which is dated to the ninth or tenth century CE. This manuscript fragment contains a version of the Ashem Vohu prayer composed originally in the Avestan language. This fragment, written in Central Asia is the oldest extant copy of any Zarathushti Scriptural material and is about 300 years older than the oldest extant copies of the Vendidad from India and Iran which are dated from around the end of the thirteenth century CE. “This manuscript fragment appears to be the top 10 lines of a scroll. Traces of where the next sheet was attached are still visible at the bottom. The text has been written with some care in a large and calligraphic hand, with a ruled margin on the right hand side. To judge from the paper and style of calligraphy, the scribe may also have copied another similar Sogdian fragment preserved in the British Library which tells the story of the Iranian national hero Rustam.”

For scholars, the importance of this fragment lies in two key areas; firstly it provides a source of information about Zarathushtrian religion in Central Asia, which is apart from the usual sources found in Iran and India. Secondly, it attests to the spread and practice of the religion outside the traditional Persian homelands and to the continuity and antiquity of the oral tradition of the faith.

**THE ZARATHUSHTRIAN CONNECTION** The Sogdians were part of the Iranian-speaking people whose distinct historical identity is evident from around the sixth century BCE to the tenth century CE after which point they were assimilated completely into the Islamic Persian identity. The Sogdians inhabited areas that today lie in modern Uzbekistan and Tajikistan and they are the people that constructed the famous ancient cities of Samarkand and Bukhara. While the Sogdians are relatively unknown in history as they did not carve out a distinct empire of their own, historians especially those who are familiar with the “Silk Road” know of them as the great traders of Inner



Asia. The Sogdian trading networks dealt in musk, silverware, silk and many other commodities. The Sogdian presence in China has been well documented both archeologically and through numerous manuscripts that were discovered in China and Central Asia. Historians have postulated that a sizeable community of Sogdians lived in Dunhuang and had a well established place of worship. It is thought that this 'temple' or place of worship was a Zarathushtrian temple and the Sogdian manuscript fragment which was discovered there, bears testimony to that claim. "This short fragment contains one of the very few Sogdian texts which are wholly Zarathushtrian in content. The main part, written in normal Sogdian of about the ninth century, describes Zarathushtra addressing an unnamed 'supreme god.'

However the true significance lies in the first two lines which appear to be a transcription in Sogdian script of one of the holiest Zarathushtrian prayers, the Avestan Ashem Vohu, written more than 300 years earlier than any surviving Avestan manuscript. Whether the text here represents the contemporary Dunhuang pronunciation of the prayer transcribed by someone who did not understand Avestan, or whether it was copied from some older transcription or translation is unclear, but the language seems to preserve features noticeably different from the Avesta as we otherwise know it while at the same time it is substantially different from standard Sogdian. For example, the word for 'truth' is represented neither by Avestan ashem, nor by a Sogdian equivalent such as \* rtu or reshtyak, but by - rtm, a spelling which represents a form identical with Achaemenid Old Persian \* rtam."

Evidence exist from the documentary record that by the eight century CE the Sogdians in Dunhuang were becoming sinicized (assimilated into the Chinese culture) and not long after any evidence of them as a distinct community disappears.

We can see even through a brief examination of this nature that the discovery of historical documents not only helps us to add to the body of knowledge about the past but also helps us to learn about hitherto unknown areas in some cases forcing us through their very discovery, to reexamine theories and concepts that were held to be unassailable

## Endnotes:

- I. See Abegg, Martin Jr., Edward Cook, Michael Wise. The Dead Sea Scrolls. San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1999. Pg 4-15.
- II. See Harrington, Daniel J. "What's New(s) about the Dead Sea Scrolls". Cross Currents. Volume 44.4, Winter 1994-95: Pg 470,471.
- III. Ibid. PG 471, 472.
- IV. See "Zoroastrian prayer, the Ashem Vohu" The British Library. 15 Sept. 2007.  
<http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/themes/asianafricanman/prayer.html>

V. See Waugh, Daniel C. "Dunhuang Social, Economic and Political History." Dunhuang. 1999. 15 Sept. 2007.  
<http://depts.washington.edu/silkroad/cities/china/dh/sochist.html>

VI. See "Zoroastrian prayer, the Ashem Vohu" The British Library. 15 Sept. 2007.  
<http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/themes/asianafricanman/prayer.html>

*Mr. Daraius M. Bharucha is the Chair of Zoroastrian Society of Ontario's Religious Education Committee and Vice-Chair of the Inter-faith Committee. He was the Chair of the Program Committee for the XIV North American Zoroastrian Congress held in Toronto. Daraius has a B.A. Specialized Honours in Religious Studies (Summa Cum Laude) and a Bachelor of Education degree. He is a recipient of the Governor General of Canada's Silver Medal for Academic Excellence and is currently a high school teacher.*



## WORKS CITED AND REFERENCED

- "Zoroastrian prayer, the Ashem Vohu" The British Library. 15 Sept. 2007.



## Attempts for the revival and preservations of scriptural manuscripts

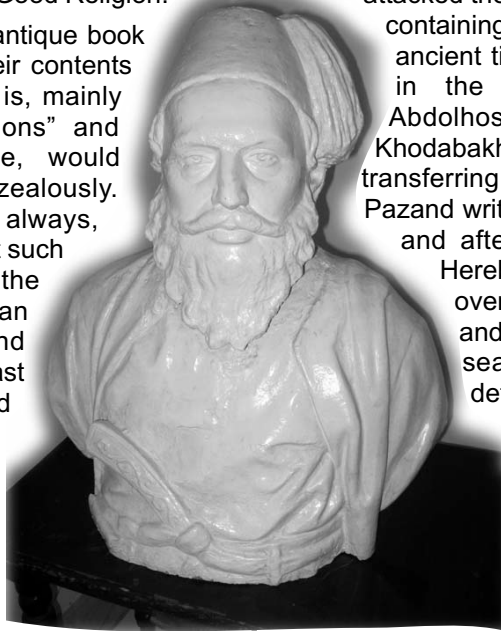
**Prof. Katayoun Mazdapour Ph.D**

**A**ncient manuscripts, especially the scriptural ones, form the major treasures of human culture. They are of topmost importance, for our community, in order to fathom the yet unknown details of the history of our Good Religion.

For an expert, in this field, any antique book or manuscript is a treasure and, their contents are of secondary importance. This is, mainly because the scores of "Foundations" and enthusiasts, NGOs, or otherwise, would support the research into them, zealously. Such supports have been, almost always, lacking in Iran, in spite of the fact that such relics and writings form a part of the national culture, the modern day Iran included, historical, language and cultural roots. On the contrary the past events and conditions in this land have, invariably, helped the annihilation of the existing manuscripts.

The origin of our antique Religious Manuscripts maybe, solely, attributed to the priestly class. They were the ones who had preserved our Scriptures by learning them, by heart, and passing them generations on. No sooner scripts were available, they were about the only ones who had the patience and religiosity to learn the alphabets and to preserve the scriptures in writing. Whereas till now the sons of a Mobed were compelled to learn the scriptures by heart, before being initiated into priesthood; they were also compelled to learn the 2Rs not merely to read fluently what their elders had written down but had to rewrite the scriptures with their own comments and interpretations, upon their graduation into priesthood, similar to a modern thesis submission

Language-wise, the Avestan is amongst the most ancient of Iranian languages followed by the ancient Farsi, which is found on the inscriptions of the Ackaemenian dynasty and have direct relations with the present day Farsi. Pahlavi, being the language of the Zarthoshtis in their middle periods is considered a child of the Ancient Farsi and a mother of the Dari. Ancient manuscripts have been written in all these languages. However, unlike the Romans and Greeks, in Europe who taught and did research on Latin; and in India where Sanskrit was freely taught and developed, at State expenses, the Iranians did not preserve the Avestan or even the Ancient Farsi, to the extent it was needed to preserve it's maintenance, mainly because only the Priestly Class cared to study and preserve them, as their spiritual duty, at their own cost and with harsh consequences.



As for Iran, only a few manuscripts have escaped the ravages of the umpteen wars, when all available scriptures were destroyed or carried away; and other calamities, including termites, water and fire, which attacked the well hidden writings. A wooden chest containing, the termite demolished book from ancient times written in Avestan is preserved in the Tehran University library. Prof. Abdolhossein Haery helped Mrs. Kharmen Khodabakhshi from a mobed family ancestry, in transferring the salvaged remains of a valuable Pazand writings to the Iranian Parliament Library and after due repairs it is well preserved. Hereby, all Iranians and Zarthoshtis, world over, are implored to look into the nooks and corners of their ancestral houses and search for any remains of, even deteriorated, scriptural manuscripts and get in touch with experts for their evaluation and salvations.

Added to the above, during the last century or two, those treasures suffered at the hands of their inheritors, who were ignorant of ttheir contents and values. They would be sold off to passing Jewish peddlers, in exchange for a yard, or so, of cloth or other pots and pans, and so on. (Following the Arab invasions any scriptures that the invaders got their hands on or could extract from the Iranians as a bribe to save their lives, were burnt or destroyed. As such they went underground as any other treasures would. Most of them remained abandoned due to the perishing or fleeing of the owners. The metallic and other lasting items did last and have been or are being recovered as archaeological items. However items like manuscripts got destroyed. With the advent of the Saviour Parsees, like Manekji Limji Hataria, (photo above) and prior to him, the messengers who were sent to Iran for religious instructions (the famous Rivayat gatherers), the oppressed Iranian Zarathushtis came to their senses and came to learn, the values of scriptures. Simultaneously the pressures were being relaxed and one would get some motivation for going in search of hidden or stacked away scriptures. However, the Pahlavi language, difficult as it is, had been forgotten and only the prayer books, mainly the Yasnas, Vandidad, and Khordeh Avesta were retained. The rest were left untouched, left to termites or even sold off to peddlers.)

The last couple of centuries has seen a turn for the good, with respect to the left over or salvaged Iranian manuscripts, mainly our scriptures. The Parsis of India, aided by the prevailing cultural importance that the western world placed on major world religions, came to the rescue, to salvage our scriptures. (The advent of



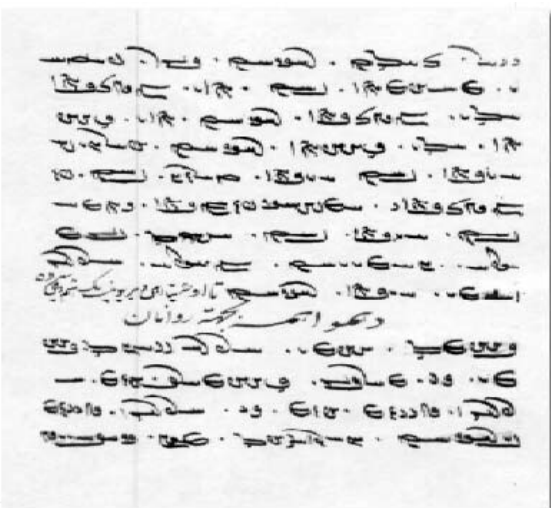
western researchers kept bringing back the knowledge and the making of sense out of the Zand (In between lines writings of Avesta meanings, written in Pahlavi) and Pazand (Footnotes and further interpretations of the Zand). That phenomenon has, greatly, helped the salvaging, preservation and, even, renovating the ancient scriptures, the way the likes of those mentioned, below, have been doing.

In Iran perhaps the first one who attempted the evaluation and preservation and the publication of our ancient scriptures was Prof. Mahyar Navvabi. During the late 1940's Dr. Farhang Mehr, the Dean of the Shiraz University, and others including Prof. Navvabi, persuaded the K. R Cama Institute of Oriental Researches to loan them some fifty seven volumes of rare manuscripts, in Pahlavi, and other research papers on Iran.

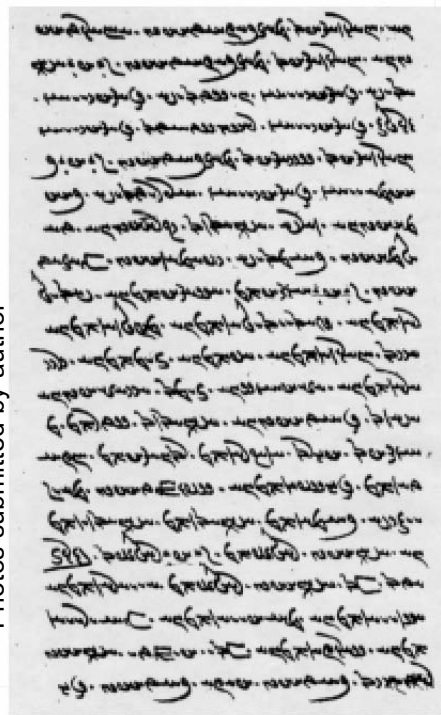
Currently the *Foundation of Ancient Iranian Manuscripts* has been established with the above aims in mind and has been registered, with the Iranian Government. The author, of this article, aided by Mr Mohamed Reza Mohamadi, has accepted the post of the General Manager and with the membership, and sponsorship, of several prominent Zarthoshtis, including leading Iranian Mobeds. For the establishment and licensing, this Institute is indebted to Mr Hassan Lotfi, advocate, and for the expertise of Prof. Iraj Afshar.

The major works, under print at present, include two Avestan manuscripts borrowed from the libraries of the Late Arbab Jamshid Soroushian. One of them is a hand written Khordeh Avesta by Molla Behrooz Eskandar, an uncle to Arbab Keikhosrow Shahrokh and is written in the year 1226 YZ. The second one is an old Yasna manuscript, but with the page having the author's name and dates missing. A third book, in publication, under the auspices of Tehran University is, perhaps, the oldest available Avestan manuscript, including the Yasnas, Vandidads and Visperads, written by Mobed Fereidoon

Sample of handwritten Khordeh Avesta by Molla Behrooz Eskandar, 1226 YZ



Oldest Avestan manuscript 976 YZ ,  
Vasna/Vendidad  
Photos submitted by author



Marzban of Kerman, written in SharifAbad Yazd in the memory of a lost son and dates back to 976 YZ.

The children of the late Arbab Fereidoon Zarthoshti have provided the funding of the Fereidoon Marzban Publication, in the memory of their parents Fereidoon and Mehrbanoo.

The above named Institute is in the beginning of it's activities and extends it's hands for financial help and in the supply of material for republication, to each and everyone of our community, or to anyone who is willing to help. Our request to the K. R Cama Oriental Institute Library for the loan of some selected manuscripts has been kept pending until the repairs and rearrangements, in hand, are finished. We are, anxiously waiting for their help.

## Prof Katayoon Mazdapour

Born 1943 in Yazd, Prof Mazdapour obtained her PhD in Languages and Cultures of Ancient Iran in 1981 and joined the Tehran University. She also has a Fellowship of the Institute for Humanities and Cultural Studies. She has several publications to her credit : 1 Dictionary – Spoken Language of the Zarthoshtis of Yazd 1980, Reprint 2006 2 Research into Manuscript MU29, published 1999. 3 The Zarthoshtys published 2003, reprint 2005; Iranian Counselling (Andarznameh) in print.





### Kerman Iran

All objects of the museum have been gathered from Zarathushti families, the oldest being a small copper atashdan that, according to its inscription, dates back to about 150 years. There are also some hand written Avestas in both the Pahlavi and Farsi scripts, as well as unique photos and private letters which the Kerman Cultural Heritage experts believe are more than a hundred years old. Copper, bronze, brass, ceramic, clay or glass oil-burning lamps, pots, jars, bottles, dishes, kerosene or wood-burning samovars and kettles, agricultural and measuring instruments and tools and clothes are some of the other objects in the museum.

There are also documents carved on stone that mention Maneckji Saheb

(Maneckji Hatariya, Hindustani) who came to Kerman from India. Besides constructing and repairing the Atashkadehs, schools, as well as the Dakhmeh in and around Ghanatghestan, he is beloved and venerated for getting the Qajar kings of the period to agree to abolish the jaziya tax for Zarathushtis. Another stone document contains the details of the permission granted by king Shah Abbas (Safavid era, nearly 400 years ago) to establish the Shah Varahram Izad, (a second place of worship) as a favor to the Kerman Zarathushti Atashkadeh. Another stone document was the



The Iran Zarathushti Anthropological Museum, located in newly constructed building on the premises of the Kerman Zarathushti Anjoman, was officially open to the public on the day of Jashn-e-Tirgan, 1384 (10 July, 2005) in the presence of dignitaries from the provincial government.

The idea for such a museum was proposed in 1362 (1983), by Dr. Parviz Vakhshoori, then President of the Zarathushti Anjoman and Mr. Mehran Gheibi, the librarian. They asked the community to donate their heirlooms and empty out their storerooms of the artifacts which were gathering dust there. They also gathered antiques from places of Zarathushti worship.

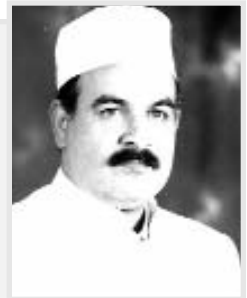
A preliminary collection was first exhibited in the library of the Anjoman and as it gathered steam, it was moved to the hall behind the atashkadeh. By now, Moobedyar Mehran Gheibi was a member of the anjoman council, and began a correspondence with local and national dignitaries asking for permission to establish the museum, as well as for financial support. Meanwhile he continued adding to the collection.

After the official permission, the Kerman Cultural Heritage Organization agreed to finance the setting up of the exhibition space and to construct the required shelving. The museum is now on the official tourist maps and in the guide books.

The museum building (above) was donated in 1381 (2002) by Mrs. Mahindokht Siyavoshiyan in memory of her husband, the late Mr. Hormozdyar Oshidari and was constructed as a modern Atashkadeh with a gas fire. Since there was already a traditional atashkadeh on the premises, the building was converted into a museum with the agreement of the Oshidari family. However, the gas fire still burns!

**Born in Zanjan, Iran, Mehran Gheibi** holds a bachelor's degree in agronomy and plant breeding from Tehran University and a master's degree in agronomy from Isfahan University of Technology. He is a researcher at the Kerman Agriculture Research Center. Mehran has conducted classes in the Zarathushti religion in Kerman,

Karaj and Isfahan. He is a member of the Kerman Anjoman and has been their chief librarian. He has been one of the major forces in establishing the Zarathushti anthropological museum. His parents concealed their Zarathushti heritage while they lived in cities that had very few Zarathushtis, and it was not until they decided to return to Kerman that their children knew that they were, indeed, Zarathushtis. This was the beginning of more than 33 years of continuous research in the field of Zarathushti religion and culture. He studied for the post of Mobedyar for several years with Mobeds from Yazd and Kerman. In 2001, he was officially declared a Mobedyar by the Iran Mobedan Association.





establishment of the Keykhosrow Shahrokh High school. The original building has been demolished and a school for intellectually challenged children has been constructed on the premises. Another old stone carving has the symbol of the Fravahar.

The museum is administrated by Kerman Zarathushti Anjoman. All artifacts collected have not been exhibited, and there are still many precious documents on paper and cloth, letters, minutes of meetings and oral evidence in the KZA storerooms. These include documents hand written by Arbab Keykhosrow Shahrokh and the minutes

of meetings of the Anjoman-e Naseri-ye Javanan-e Zartoshti-ye Kerman. The permission for this youth association is said to have been granted by Naser-e-din Shah after intercession by Maneckji. Unfortunately some of these objects are in danger of deteriorating and we hope that donations from the public will save them.

## ARTIFACTS OF KERMAN ANTHROPOLOGICAL MUSUEM



### PHOTOS:

1. Traditional women's clothes; 2. Handwritten documents & picture of Moobed; 3. Ancient spinning wheel; 4. Wine cask Baghali; 5. Water Jug; 6. Implements for harvesting; 7. Oil lamps; 8. Hand written Yasna and cloth textured Asho Zarthusht's image. 9. Old artifacts

Photos courtesy Moobedyar Mehran Gheibi

When it comes to a religion and a culture as old and venerated as Zarathushti religion, the study of ancient manuscripts offers more than just a chance to reaffirm our beliefs. It is a chance to glimpse at our roots, and an opportunity to preserve our heritage for future generations.

The earliest Zarathushti manuscripts still in existence today are our scriptures called the Avesta. Copies of these have been found dating from the late 1200s and early 1300s; most of our treasured texts are relatively recent, from the 16th to 19th centuries. Written in the Avestan

language that was spoken for hundreds of years before the birth of Jesus Christ, the texts were later translated into Pahlavi, which is derived from the Aramaic language of the Achaemenid Empire of 550 to 330 BC. (When translated into Pahlavi, this particular religious text is referred to as the Zend Avesta.)

**WHY THE TRANSLATION?** The Avesta was passed down via oral tradition for generations; they were finally written down centuries later (during the times of the Sasanians, the last native Persian rulers before the Arab invasion in the mid-1600s and the rulers under whom Zarathushtis flourished in Persia). By studying the ancient texts, scholars have noted that, by the time the Avesta was being translated into Pahlavi, it is clear that the priests who wrote them down did not have a full understanding of the Avestan texts, leading to different interpretations of key religious tenets -- a fact of which we would not be aware if ancient manuscripts were allowed to crumble into oblivion.

One shining example of a well-preserved ancient text is a 1323 copy of the Videvdat (also known as the Vendidad), the only complete book of the Sasanian Avesta that has survived. (Images of the text are viewable online at



Photos courtesy of UNESCO New Delhi's  
PARZOR Project; reprinted with permission.



*Lylah M. Alphonse is the Consulting Editor for the FEZANA Journal. She is an editor at The Boston Globe newspaper, where she writes for their Travel, Living/Arts, and Magazine sections. She is also the author of Triumph Over Discrimination: The Story of Farhang Mehr, and she writes online at <http://WriteEditRepeat.blogspot.com>.*



## WRITTEN IN STONE

By Dinaz Rogers

The mighty Persian Empires (circa 559 BCE.—652 CE.) left very little of their history, exploits and accomplishments in writing. We know of them through the writings of the Hebrew Prophets and other contemporaries, but mainly through the biased accounts of the Greek and Roman historians of antiquity.

Around the time of Cyrus the Great, Iran did not have an alphabet or representation for the written word, but the Persians were master imitators and readily adopted what they found useful from other cultures and times. Cyrus the Great and his successors imitated and later adapted the wedged-shaped cuneiform script from their neighbors, the Mesopotamians. This type of writing was soon replaced by Aramaic (a non-Persian Semitic language) which went on to become the working language of the vast and diverse Persian Empire as it proved to be more practical for trade and administrative purposes because of its simplicity and was more wide spread in the Near East

It was at this stage, when some believe that Cyrus and his successors (Darius the Great, Xerxes, Artaxerxes, and Darius II) initiated a system of preservation of our manuscripts. By etching their words literally in stone rather than on papyrus, their legacy has lasted all the way into our times!

Our Persian heritage, written and sculpted in rock and stone especially in the ruins of Persepolis, Pasargadae, and Naqsh-e-Rustam--are some of the visual remnants that have survived centuries of human vandalism and the vagaries of Mother Nature.

### AT PARSA (Persepolis)

With the Zagros Mountains as the backdrop, from the plains of Marv-i-Dasht, sprawling on a 33-acre terrace rises one of Iran's most glorious *living manuscripts*.

The essence and significance of Parsa is in its unique architectural style, spectacular opulence and royal splendor. Over the last two centuries,

excavations at Parsa gave scholars a look into ancient Persia. These wordpictures in bas-reliefs, other sculptures, arts and treasures, stand in lieu of the written word, recording the lives of laborers, stone cutters and haulers, carvers, woodworkers, artisans, scribes, royal inspectors, and comptrollers. The kings, emissaries, royal dignitaries, guards, (with all the rich trappings of the Persian royal court), the thrones, canopies, were represented on the walls and columns. A few artifacts like weapons, incense burners, jewelry, drinking vessels of those long ago palaces tell us tales sans manuscripts.

Stairways at Parsa, too, tell us stories. Carvings of representatives from some 24 countries in their unique national costumes, hats and even beards—all bearing special gifts and tributes of treasures and animals to the mighty king himself, from all parts of the Persian Empire prove to be living written words.



## AT PASARGADAE

Pasargadae rose as Cyrus' royal residence, where one of his decisive victories--that over the Medes took place. Unfortunately, this location proved to be impractical, as it was much further to the east from the empire's military, trade, and industrial centers. Yet Pasargadae became a national shrine, filled with many complex and detailed structures--the royal palace, the audience halls and most importantly, Cyrus' tomb. Later, it stood alone, only to be used for the crowning ceremonies of the succeeding kings. Yet in its isolation, this complex left us living manuscripts that told so much about the lives and times of those Persians. (Please refer to a companion piece SANDS OF IRAN, FEZANA, Fall 2005, Pp. 96-98)

## AT NAQSH-E-RUSTAM

Four miles north of Parsa, *ancient manuscripts*, carved into the steep, ochre-colored limestone, rise some 300 feet high. Entombed therein are Xerxes, Darius the Great, Artaxerxes I and Darius II. On the caravan road to Ecbatana, near the village of Behistun, Darius the Great proclaimed his life story some 300 feet high on a cliff in Old Persian, Elamite, and Akkadian. The base of this cliff was smoothed out preventing anyone from climbing to read or vandalize them.

Coins found at some excavation sites are messages sent into the future--as each has inscribed symbols and writings important to that culture and era. Most are displayed and protected in museums and some with private collectors.

To accommodate the complexities of imperial life the Achaemenids had five royal residences: Susa and Babylonia (served as the Administrative hubs); Pasargadae (the coronation site); Ecbatana, some 6,000 feet above sea level (the royal summer capital); and Persepolis, (a significant site for New Year's Celebrations). Thus scattered throughout Iran and beyond are the remnants of living manuscripts in stone and in structural designs of the Persian Empire.

In spite of the ignorance and animosity toward Zoroastrianism, as in the early and in latter days--apathy, vandalism and neglect toward the monuments of the Persian Empires--

*Dinaz Kutar Rogers is a teacher and a published writer. She thinks of herself as a modern-day Johnny Appleseed: sowing not apple seeds but hope, knowledge, inspiration pride and joy about the magnificence of Ariana Vaejo and its ancient faith--Zarathushti deen*

some of our visual arts, histories and stories in granite, have withstood the test of time, up until now. Let us do our best to prevent what happened to the Bamiyan Buddhas--from happening to our ancient stone manuscripts in Iran. (In March 2001, the Taliban blew up the two Buddha statues, as they were an abomination to Islamic sensitivities regarding idolatry).

With what urgency, passion and perseverance we mobilize in toto to preserve these glorious remnants remains to be seen.

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# COMPARISONS BETWEEN *Zoroastrianism & Christianity*

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**ABSTRACT:** What are the similarities and differences between Zoroastrianism and Christianity? Is Zoroastrianism monotheistic, polytheistic, or henotheistic? This paper attempts to answer these questions by analyzing Zoroastrian and Christian views of God and humanity. During this process these religions are compared and contrasted to establish their similarities and differences.

**“Zoroaster taught nothing about God which a Christian would not endorse and much that a Christian should add”- James Moulton**

James Hope Moulton, a Wesleyan minister and missionary, wrote these words after spending numerous years studying Zoroastrian religion in India. For Moulton, Zoroastrianism interested him by its unique connection with the Judeo-Christian worldview, especially its heritage as an ancient monotheism. Moulton would eventually come to conclude that Zoroastrianism had the very foundation as its western counterparts, and much of its doctrinal infrastructure. Was he correct in his assessment, or was he misled? Comparing these religions to one another in their views of God and humanity should aid in our discovery of the veracity or falsity of Moulton's claims.

As Moulton suggests there are numerous similarities between the Zoroastrian and Christian view of God; both see God as an infinite and invisible being. In connecting these two faiths it is of prime importance to understand that both agree that God has multiple persons within Himself. Here is where the Zoroastrian religion and Christianity part ways with Rabbinic Judaism and Islam. To the former, God has a plurality of characters that make up who He is, while to the latter, God has a strict oneness, or is only to be thought of in terms of one personage.

The difficulty with Zoroastrianism is in defining the six “Amesha Spentas”, or “Holy Immortals”, who interpreted by some scholars are part of Ahura Mazda, and by others as deities created by and independent of Him. Lawrence Mills goes a step further in calling them *God's character and His very nature*, while Miles Dawson calls them “the elements of God” and say that they *make up God*. If these spiritual beings are connected with Ahura Mazda then we have a close connection with the Christianity's view of the Trinity and if they are not then we have a very unrelated belief in multiple gods.

The Spenta Mainyu (Holy Spirit) and Angra Mainyu (Evil Spirit) also enter into Zoroastrian beliefs. These two spiritual beings are called “the Primal Spirits” and the “twins” in Yasna 30:3. Their genesis is debated, whether they are created and have their origin in Ahura Mazda, or whether they are uncreated and thus co-eternal with Him. If the latter is true then the Spenta Mainyu becomes connected with Ahura Mazda, much like the Holy Spirit is to the Christian God. In terms of divine attributes both religions share much in common. In the Avesta, Ahura Mazda is depicted as the Creator of the world (Yasna 31:7), omniscient (Yasna 31:13), omnipresent (Yasna 44:2), personal (Yasna 31:21), and just (Yasna 44:3), and in the Bible Yahweh is given such descriptions (Gen 1:1, 2 Chron 16:9, Psalm 139:1-2, Deut 32:4). It is evident that in the Bible we have a more clearly defined view of God yet even in the Avestas, though sometimes difficult to understand and contextualize, there remains clear pictures of divine characteristics.

Zoroastrianism sees the world at war; a world divided into two camps, those who believe the Lie (druj) and those who believe in Order (asha), and “by the endowment of intelligence man can ‘frame his confession’ and determine his own destiny by following the Right or the Lie”. Herein lies Zoroastrian anthropology: humanity was created by Ahura Mazda to live in this war zone and to triumph over the Lie and its chief exponent, Angra Mainyu. Regarding Angra Mainyu, Boyce notes that “it was to overcome him and destroy evil that Ahura Mazda made this world, as a battleground where their forces could meet”. Thus the rubric of both religions is the allegiance that must be given to God and His cause in the spiritual war contained in this world. One scholar goes as far to say of Zoroastrianism: “if there is in any sense an ultimate principle in Zoroastrianism it would appear to be the ultimacy of moral choice.”

In light of the supremacy of moral accountability one must ask how sin is viewed within their view of humanity. For Zarathushtris sin is more an error, or misplaced understanding, whereby a person wrongly understands himself and Ahura Mazda; R.C. Zaehner comments: “Man's original sin, then, in Zoroastrianism is seen not so much as an act of disobedience as an error of judgment: he mistakes the Devil for the Creator”. Sins, then, as Zoroastrians understand them, are credited to the account of the individual, and along with their good deeds are placed on the scale. Salvation then comes through performing more good deeds than bad, by outweighing his sin with his *daena*.

Christianity on the other hand, sees sin as a legal transgression of moral laws established by God. The

Apostle John writes: "Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness" (1 John 3:4), and Paul states that "where there is no law, there is no transgression" (Romans 4:15). So then Christianity starts with humans as guilty of breaking God's laws and then works from there to a legal salvation, or as Paul puts it, justification. Wayne Grudem, a leading evangelical scholar defines justification as "an instantaneous legal act of God in which he thinks our sins as forgiven and Christ's righteousness as belonging to us, and declares us to be righteous in his sight". Clearly, then both sin and salvation are viewed differently in the Christian worldview, and humanity is placed in more of a strictly positional category before God.

We have seen that these religions parallel in many ways with their similar teachings about God and humanity. Moulton was correct in seeing these similarities and recognizing them for what they are worth comparatively. Therefore, it would be wise to conclude along with Moulton that there are both great similarities and differences between these two faiths and seek to value their connections and uniqueness'. Hopefully, then comparative religious studies can move forward in insight as we appreciate what both of these religions have to offer as explanations to fundamental human questions.

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# Women in Ancient Iran

## Through Achaemenian Times

Dina G. McIntyre

We do not have extensive direct evidence, from Iranian sources, of what life was like in ancient Iran, in large part because of destructive major invasions that occurred around 331 BCE and 647 CE. Most of the information we now have was written by those who were the enemies of Iran, and thus are slanted by their own cultural and political biases. But some ancient Iranian texts do remain, which have now been supplemented by archeological evidence, from which we



can glean bits and pieces of what life was like for ancient Iranian women through Achaemenian times.

The earliest textual evidence comes from the Gathas of Zarathushtra, which many scholars believe were composed around 1,100 BCE or earlier. The Gathas, as well as other Avestan texts demonstrate a happy equality between men and women in religious and personal relationships. Zarathushtra named his daughter Pouruchista which means "full of illumined thought"; -- On her wedding day, he advised her "Do thou persevere, Pouruchista ..... To thee shall He grant the firm foundation of good thinking and the alliance of truth [asha] and of wisdom..." Y 53.3 (Insler translation through out). According to Zarathushtra, "good thinking" "truth" and "wisdom" are divine attributes -- attributes of Ahura Mazda -- which Zarathushtra thought his daughter capable of attaining, along with all the living.

On this same occasion, he gave the following advice to all the brides and grooms who were then getting married: "Let each of you try to win the other with [asha]...." Y53.5. The meaning of "asha" includes the truths of mind and spirit -- all that is true, good, beneficent, (generous), and right. This great advice tells us that in Zarathushtra's view, the marriage relationship is not one of domination / subservience, but of partnership, with each spouse making the same effort to win the love and respect of the other with truth, goodness, generosity, and what's right.

The later Yasnas are full of instances in which men and women are specifically mentioned together. An early Zarathushtrian prayer starts with the words "Those men and women, both do we revere, whose every act of worship is alive with asha..." (I.J.S. Taraporewala translation). In an age when men worshipped gods by slaughtering animals (and possibly each other) in stone temples, Zarathushtra introduced the idea of men and women worshipping God -- side by side -- in the temple of life, by infusing His divine qualities into each thought, word and action.

This equality of men and women in religion, extended even to the ritual. The Visparad mentions "... the saints of the ritual, male and female." (Visparad 1.3; Mills translation in *Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. 31, page 335). And a much later text (the *Aerpatatan* and *Nirangistan*, as translated by S.J. Bulsara), speaks of women priests, indicating that when it was necessary for a priest to travel, such priestly duties were allocated between men and women priests (not necessarily husband and wife) in a way that harmonized with family responsibilities, so that neither priestly duties nor family responsibilities should suffer. The text states that as between two priests who are married to each other, if both have control over property and can manage wealth, then either one can travel to perform priestly duties. If only the man has control over property and can manage wealth, then the woman priest should travel to perform priestly duties. And if only the woman has control over property and can manage wealth, then the man priest should travel to perform priestly duties (pages 17 -- 18) -- indicating not only that women were priests, but that they had independent control over property, even after marriage. This text (written by Zarathushti priests) also insists on a non-Zarathushti woman's right to practice her own religion without legal or physical persecution. It states that if a man converts to the Good Religion (the name Zarathushtis called their religion in the ancient world because of its emphasis on goodness), he should not force his wife to convert. He is not permitted to strike her, or stop supporting her, nor does she pass from the condition of being his wife, because she refuses to convert (page 40). Regrettably, it also suggests that the newly converted Zarathushti husband should not sleep with his non-Zarathushti wife (surely a subtle, but unworthy, effort to persuade the wife to convert!). Whether this suggestion was followed by such husbands, the text does not say.

This equality in personal relationships and religion, extended to governance as well. The *Haptanghaiti*, (a text close in time to the Gathas), prays: "..... May a good ruler, man or woman, thus assume rule over us....." Y41.2 (Humbach translation), indicating that in those ancient times not only did women rule over tribes or nations in their own

right ("...man or woman..."), but could be good, respected, rulers as well.

In the early 1900s, an archeological dig in Persepolis, the palace of Darius the Great, discovered hundreds of clay tablets (now known as the Persepolis Fortification Tablets) some of which are discussed in Brosius, *The Women of Ancient Persia*, 559 -- 331 BCE. These tablets included payroll records which showed that the numbers of male and female workers were "well balanced" (Brosius, page 182). Women were employed as both workers and supervisors, received the same rate of pay in wine, beer, grain or silver, as their male colleagues (pages 182, 153 -- 160), and received additional pay as mothers -- unfortunately with preferential treatment by one (but not all) employer, for a



mother of boys (page 172, 178, 182). These tablets also show that women owned, and had full control over, their own estates throughout the empire, were involved in the management and administration of these estates, disposed of their rents and income, employed work forces, paid taxes, and enjoyed economic independence. They had their own personal seals, and issued orders in the form of letters under seal, to various administrators (page 180). They had the legal right to act independently from their husbands (page 197), and participated in public feasts and in the social life of the Court (page 96).

A few hundred years after Alexander's invasion, Moulton, in his work "Early Zoroastrianism" (Lectures delivered at Oxford and at London, 1912) mentions the report of a foreign diplomat Tchang K'ien, who wrote in 128 BCE that in Khorassan and Bactria he found two classes of population, the nomads, and the "unwarlike". The "unwarlike" in Bactria who were agriculturalists, he describes as follows: "...there is no supreme ruler, each city and town electing its own chief. They pay great deference to their women, the husbands being guided by them in their decisions." And Moulton concludes "...the agricultural population, dwelling among the nomads, reflects the features of the Gathas sufficiently well." (page 85).

The freedom which women enjoyed in ancient Iran, is also depicted in the Shah Nameh where for example, Gordafried, the daughter of a garrison commander was described as "well versed and unrivalled in the arts of warfare." When Sohrab laid siege to her father's garrison, she challenged Sohrab to single combat, during which the tip of his lance caught her helmet, and her long hair streamed out as she rode, causing Sohrab to exclaim in astonishment: "If the women of Iran are so valiant, what must their men be like!" Similarly, Rustom's daughter, Banoogoshasb, was described (by her husband) as a knight in her own right. It is interesting that these legendary stories of women warriors are echoed factually in the Cambridge History of Iran which mentions that the women warriors of a Persian satrap, were introduced to Alexander at a banquet in Ecbatana (Vol. II, page 484). There is even mention (in the CHI) of a woman admiral in Achaemenian times, but I cannot at this time find a page reference for it.

In conclusion, it would be simplistic (and possibly inaccurate) to state that there were no differences at all between the treatment of men and women in ancient Iran. Unbiased evidence of life in ancient Iran is sparse. But what little remains to us, establishes that women were regarded as capable and respected equals -- an equality that in some ways is unequalled even today in the United States (for example, in matters of equal pay, the glass ceiling, as well as women rulers and priests). This evidence establishes that ancient Iranian women enjoyed an unusual degree of legal and social equality and freedom in making their life choices -- in worship, in entering the priesthood, in marriage, in owning and managing property, in ruling kingdoms, in earning livelihoods in the workplace, and even in warfare.

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# From Rapes to Ruins to Reconciliations: The Story of the Women of Africa

Anahita Dua

Denis Mukwege, a Congolese gynaecologist and head of the Panzi hospital, cannot bear to listen to the stories his patients tell him anymore.

Every day, 10 new women and girls who have been raped show up at his



hospital. Many have been so sadistically attacked from the inside out, butchered by bayonets and assaulted with chunks of wood, that their reproductive and digestive systems are beyond repair and while working as a medical volunteer at the Panzi hospital I was able to see the most raw side of human nature.

The reason for the rapes remains unknown although clearly they exist to destroy the social structure of the Congolese community. Rapes of wives and mothers are always accompanied by the brutal execution of the husband and children in order to truly devastate the family. In my stay at the hospital, surrounding villages were attacked and the women's children were butchered to death with garden tools, all the women were raped, and some were forced to eat the flesh of their neighbours and family.

John Holmes, the United Nations under secretary general for humanitarian affairs, stated that the sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo is the worst in the world. The UN reported 27,000 sexual assaults in 2006 in South Kivu Province alone and, although war officially ended in the DRC almost a decade ago, systematic rapes and serious violence is on the rise. Although elections did take place, the justice system and the military still barely function, and UN officials say Congolese government troops are among the worst offenders when it comes to rape. Large swaths of the country, especially in the east, remain authority-free zones where civilians are at the mercy of heavily armed groups who have made warfare a livelihood and survive by raiding villages and abducting women for ransom.

According to victims, one of the newest groups to emerge is called the Rastas, a mysterious gang of dreadlocked fugitives who live deep in the forest, wear shiny tracksuits and Los Angeles Lakers jerseys and are notorious for burning babies, kidnapping women and literally chopping up anybody who gets in their way.

This 17-year-old girl (pictured left) went home after her high school year to meet her mother for the summer and was kidnapped by rebel forces. She was taken deep into their campsite in the forest and kept in a cage in the middle of the campsite to be raped repeatedly by all for the next 8 months. She fell pregnant and managed to run away only to now be faced with serious financial burdens and single-motherhood. Her story was echoed almost verbatim in the time I was there I actually lost track of names. Another

friend of mine, Sukela and her 9 year old daughter were walking home from the market when they were stopped by soldiers.

Sukela (pictured right) was led off and gang raped, while her daughter, who was too tight to be penetrated, was held down and had sharp objects shoved into her vagina until her uterus perforated. All these women developed serious fistulas: holes between their urethra and vagina,



vagina and rectum, or, in the worst cases, holes between all three passages causing constant leakage of urine and faeces. The doctors at the Panzi hospital work tirelessly to fix these women because if there is a hell on earth, living with a fistula is just that. However, to surgically fix these fistulas between 3 and 6 surgeries are often required each with a 3 month wait time in order for healing to take place. Women are often divorced or severely mistreated by their husbands and living at Panzi while waiting for their surgery is a Godsend. This woman, another friend of mine, was kidnapped by a group of men and gang raped while she was 7 months pregnant. Her horror did not stop there as one of the men announced he would give a prize to the first man to snatch the baby out of her uterus with his bare hands. This led to 3 brutal days of violence but thankfully she did not miscarry and the baby is to be born within the next month. Her husband, however, now refers to her as "rebel prostitute" and will no longer allow her in the house.

At Panzi Hospital, where Dr. Mukwege performs as many as six rape-related surgeries a day, bed after bed is filled with women lying on their backs, staring at the ceiling, with colostomy bags hanging next to them because of all the internal damage. While in Africa, I kept asking the same question, "what can be done to stop this brutality?" The gentle smiles of the women were always accompanied with this statement, "tell the people in your country."

Dr. Mukwege said his oldest patient was 75, his youngest 3. While at Panzi the shocking stories seemed to be endless, what was undoubtedly even more astonishing was the resilience of these women. African women have seen decades of ill-treatment and injustice similar to women in many other parts of the world. However, they still manage to wake up everyday, care for their children, and try to be contributing members to a society that seems to have forgotten them. Panzi hospital is a much needed beacon of light for these destitute women and its work needs to be acknowledged and supported. My role and promise to these women was to

make sure the world knows what is happening in the heart of Africa. Violence against women is always terrible and should be battled whenever it is manifested, but this type of extreme brutality has been occurring for ages without people even knowing it exists. The most important thing we can do as outsiders is to spread awareness of this issue and not tolerate its existence.


Dr. Mukwege, the incredible doctor who runs the Panzi hospital, said he remembered the days when Bukavu was known for its stunning lake views and nearby national parks. "There used to be a lot of gorillas in there," he said, but now they've been replaced by much more savage beasts."



*If you would like more information about the Panzi hospital and its incredible work please feel free to contact Anahita Dua [Anahita46@yahoo.com](mailto:Anahita46@yahoo.com)*

**Anahita Dua** is currently a 4th year medical student at the University of Aberdeen, UK. She has a passion for international medicine and travels extensively on medical missions around the world. She has worked in Kenya, the Democratic republic of Congo, India, Palestine, and will be working in maternal health care in Afghanistan this December.






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**FIRE IN AVESTA  
ATASH NEYAYESH**

**Part 1**

**Part 2**

We find many references in Avesta and Pahlavi literature to show that Fire is venerated, and equated with the Glow of Ahura Mazda. In the Holy hymns of Zarathushtra the reference to fire has been made at least nine times by the Prophet. We also find that there is a close association of Fire and Asha in Zoroastrianism. Asha primarily means Cosmic Order, similar to Sanskrit Rta of the ancient Aryan society.

Aryans are the root stock that comprised the Proto-Indo-Iranian tribal group. These Aryan tribes migrated to India and to the Iranian plateau to form respectively, the present day communities of Hindus and Zarathushtis. They pioneered a way of life in tune with cosmic order, and through it, to commune with Omniscient God- from Nature to Nature's God.

Asha has many meanings and connotations such as Purity of mind and body, Truth, Justice and Righteousness. In the hierarchy of Amesha Spenta Asha is third in line after Ahura Mazda and Vohu Manah, and there it is named with an appellation Vahista meaning the best. Asha Vahista presides over Ahura Mazda's most glowing creation, the Fire.

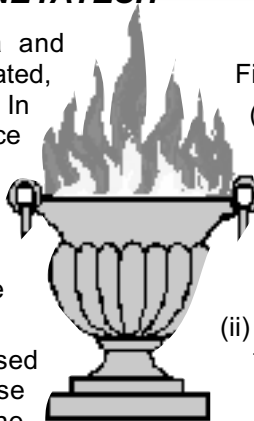
In order to achieve life in consonance with Nature, Zarathustra has provided the path of Asha for mankind, which is stated in Yasna 72.11 as follows:

**Aevo pantao yo ashahe, vispe anyesham  
apantam**

"There is only one path, the path of Asha, all the rest are no paths."

[The above quotation is found only in the colophon of the old Yasna manuscript of Copenhagen (k5; see Geldner, Yasna 72.11; West, Denkard, 484)]

In Bundahisn (Ch 3.7), it is said that "Ohrmazd created fire and attached to it a ray from the endless light. The same text (Ch 3.8) also states that corporeal creation was static. Waters did not flow, plants did not grow and there were no vital signs, until they were permeated with this divine Universal energy to bring them to life. The Aryan text of Rig Veda also pays glowing tributes to fire. No doubt then that a devotee yearns to have the glimpse of the Supreme Being through the medium of fire.



Let us now turn to the relationship between Fire and Asha in Zarathushtrian literature.

(i) In Yasna 34.4 the devotees yearn for the bright fire of Ahura Mazda through Asha.

**At toi Atrem Ahura aojonghvantem asha  
usemahi**

"O Ahura Mazda we ardently desire Thy Fire, mighty through Asha."

(ii) In Yasna 43.4 Ahura Mazda provides justice through the heat (glow) of His Fire and the strength of Asha.

**Thwaha garema athro asha-aojangho  
hyat moi Vangheush haze jimat Manangho**

"And (Thou) shall come to me through the heat (splendor) of Thy Fire, possessing the strength of righteousness and good mind."

(iii) In Yasna 43.9 we notice once again the Prophet yearns to visualize Asha

through the Divine fire of Ahura Mazda as follows:

**At a thwamai athre ratanm nemangho  
Ashahya ma yavat isai manya**

"Thenceforth unto Thy Fire the offering of (my) homage (I will pay )

(and) I will esteem Asha above all as long as I am able."

Let us now turn to post Gathic literature.

In Yasna 36:1 which is a part of Haptanhaiti (Haptan Yasht) we come across a very interesting simile. Here Fire is compared with Ahura Mazda's beneficent mind, and extols fire as purifier:

**Ahya thwa athro verezena paouruye pairi-  
jasamaide,**

**Mazda Ahura thwa thwa mainnyu spenishta,  
Ye a akhtish ahmai yem akhtoyo daonghe**

"(We) first approach you through your agency, this Fire,

O Ahura Mazda which is your beneficent mind, Whoever is near filthiness you remove filthiness."



Further in HaptanYasht (Yasna 36:3):

**Atarsh voi Mazdao Ahurahya ahi,  
Mainyeush voi ahya spenishto ahi**

"O Fire you are the symbol of Ahura Mazda, you are certainly the beneficent mind."

In Hormazd Yasht (7) we come across an oblique statement, that the whole creation (universe) is created through Divine Cosmic Energy (Asha/fire):

**pukhdha vispa vohu Mazdadhata asha-chithra**

"(my) fifth name is the whole good creation of Mazda, (which is) the seed of Asha"

"Seed of Asha" is the cosmic Divine energy which is the origin and sustenance of life, a reiteration of the statement quoted above from Bundahisn.

In Rigveda 10-121-001, we find a close analogy to the above, where the 'seed of Asha' is compared with 'the Golden egg' as a reference to creating Energy of Fire.

**Hiranayagabhra samavatratagra  
Bhutayasya zaat: patir aek: aaseet**

"In the beginning the golden egg (fire),

He was the Lord of all the worlds, as soon as He came to be."

In Ardibahest Yasht-1, Ahura Mazda instructing Zarathushtra that for the worship and invocation of Him and the Amesha Spenta, Zarathushtra must appoint Ardibahest (the Fire) as the praiser, invoker, extoller, glorifier of all good shining lights and brilliant works

Adoration, respect and veneration of fire was in vogue before Zarathushtra. The very first line of Rigveda (I-001-01) states:

**Agnim irle purohitam yiagnasya devam rutviajam**

"Let us honour the fire, the chosen priest, god, minister of yagna

In Bhagvad Gita that forms the very essence of Mahabharata, we notice another close analogy. In Ch. 10.36. Krishna tells Arjuna that he is *tejas tejasvinam aham* meaning "I am the glory of the glorious". This compares very favorably with the appellation *Ahura Mazda rayomand khorehmand* – "Ahura Mazda the brilliant, the glorious" that we come across in Hormazd Yasht and in many other liturgies.

The Koran 27.8 and 28.30 states that Moses sees Jehovah as a fire in the bush; not the physical fire, but the glory of the Angels, a reflection of the glory of God.

In Exodus 19.18 we read, "and Mt. Sinai smoked....Jehovah came down upon it in Fire..."

The importance of reverence for the fire in Pentateuch is starkly demonstrated in chapter 6 of Leviticus where it states:

**"Jehovah continued to speak to Moses, saying....The burnt offering will be on the hearth upon the alter all night long...and the fire of the alter will be kindled in it. The Priest must clothe himself with his official dress....must take the fatty ashes out to a clean place outside the camp And the Fire upon the alter shall be burning in it; it shall not be put out and the priest shall burn wood on it every morning..... The Fire shall ever be burning upon the alter; it shall never go out."**

**(Lev. 6.8-13)**

This brings out a striking similarity with our rites of ever burning Fire and praying with an offering of sandalwood in Fire temples, and the bui ceremony.

It is clear from the above that Fire is recognized as the symbol of Divine light, knowledge, and enlightenment in almost all major Faiths. Scholars have associated it with, the innate fire within living, with truth and purity of Asha, or with flaming fire of thought. In the final analysis we get clear notion through mysterious, allegorical, poetical and lucid language of Avestan, Rigvedic, Koranic and Biblical scriptures that:

- Fire represents cosmic order and energy
- Fire represents righteousness, truth and divine law
- Fire represents individual spark (aatma) in every human being

Fire is the embodiment of that universal spark -Ahura Mazda- paramatma unto which all other sparks (fires) finally merge; *Man ano awayad shudan* "I have to reach Him".

#### **Acknowledgement:**

*In preparing this brief presentation, I have referred to many books. I desire to express my debt of gratitude to all those authors to whom I cannot individually say*

*"Thank you"*

**Gustad Panthaki** was born in 1940 at Udvada, India. Majority of his education was at Poona. He immigrated to Canada in 1967 and from 1972 was with Enersource Hydro, Mississauga till he retired in 2005.



In translating Atash Neyayesh one notices a spectrum of spiritual to physical sentiments incorporated in the explanations by various authors. While Dastur Minocheher-homji resorts to a highly esoteric philosophical elaboration, Ervad K.E. Kanga tends to explain the prayer more in corporeal context. In contrast the work of T.R.Sethna is an amalgam of spiritual and physical traits highlighted in various places.

An important case in point is the explanation of phrase **Ātarsh Puthra Ahurahe Mazdao** which clearly elaborates the intimacy of Sacred Fire with Ahura Mazda. Both Kanga and Sethna interpret the term Puthra through Sanskrit root 'pu' meaning to purify, or to cleanse. Their translation explains fire as the purifier agency of Ahura Mazdāo; in contrast Minocheher-homji interprets it as 'Light Divine'. Majority of Zarathushtis and western scholars simply use the word 'son' as the translation of Puthra and interpret it as 'Fire, son of Ahura Mazda'.

In the discussion that follows Ervad K.E. Kanga, T.R.Sethna and Dastur Minocheher-homji are denoted as KEK, TRS and MH respectively.

## Verse 1:

The devotee praises the fire by saying "The purifying fire of Ahura Mazda, you are worthy of praise (worship) and homage (invocation) in the abodes of mankind and may there be happiness (greatness) and good fortune unto that man who shall always worship thee with: fuel (aesmo), Baresman (*baresmo*), milk (*gao*), and mortar (*havano*) in hand". (KEK)

TRS essentially states the same thing in the first part of paragraph; however he replaces the objects with which an adherent can offer homage, in more profound terms: "With shining hands, with exalted hands, with praying hands, and with strong hands." While MH goes even a step further in his expression of the mode of worship by stating, "With illumination, with

inner exaltation, soul sustenance, and soul purification.

## Verse 2:

While the above verse establishes Fire as praiseworthy and laudable this verse speaks of adoration by providing the proper environment. KEK translates as "May You (Fire) have adequate wood, incense, fuel and nourishment". In contrast TRS describes the qualities that a Fire would bestow when provided with ideal conditions. May you become bestower of light (*aesme*), of intellect (*baoidhi*), of nourishment (*pithwi*), of high praises (*upasayene*), of life of abundance (*harethre*). May you become protector of pious life". This is put in profound terms by MH "Mayest thou be tended and tenderly cared for by devotees of maturity and wisdom."

In physical sense this verse implies that Divine Energy (Fire) should not be allowed to extinguish for lack of nourishment (fuel). Also the sacred Fire is personified as a living entity that needs nutrients to remain healthy, and continue to stay alive (ablaze), and receives sustenance it so richly deserves.

## Verse 3:

This is the most appealing part of the prayer. (KEK) states, "May you burn in this house for ever, for a very long time till the Renovation. May you bring brilliance and prosperity in this house". It is interesting to note that TRS extends the veneration not only to the physical Sacred Fire but also reminds us of the Fire of the divine spirit within all living. He speaks of the "blazing fire not just in the house but also in the human body that houses the Divine spirit of soul".

MH states, "May the mighty flame be in hearth and heart: ever growing, deep, ever constant and steady, ever bright and clear, ever unquenchable – ever waxing never



waning till the renovation be achieved along the milestones of eternity and soul's consummation".

The above can be interpreted as either the veneration of fire in a home, and/or reverence to fire as a visible symbol, of the inner light, the inner spark that dwells in every human being, and the spiritual flame that burns within each of us.

We need to keep that ignited and blazing. In physical sense – it implies to be active, industrious, and progressive.

## Verse 4:

We now come to the section where an adherent prays for fulfillment of his desires and wishes. KEK says, "O Fire the purifier, of Ahura Mazda grant me comfort (*khvathrem*) and sustenance (*thraitim*), long life (*jitim*) and happiness (*khvathrem*), greatness (*mastim*), wisdom (*spano*), fluent tongue, (*khshviwrem hizvam*), intelligence (*ushi*) for my soul (*urune*), intellect (*khrautum*) which may increase in proportion and may not diminish, and strength (*ham-varetim*) of manliness (*nairyam*)"

TRS translates with few synonymous differences such as, 'joyous welfare' for comfort, 'good memory' for wisdom, etc. However MH is globally reflective in his interpretation, "Grant unto me O Light Divine dignity (of humanity), wisdom, clear convincing speech to expound the Gospels, consciousness of my soul to comprehend the deeper meaning, intelligence-reason all comprehending, humanity all encompassing".

## Verse 5:

KEK and TRS are in close agreement in their expressions. The worshippers desire "strength for being firm footed and wakeful, sleeping only a third of the day and steadiness in one's duty. The desire



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for a progeny that is nourishing (*tuthrusham*), of innate wisdom (*asnam*) ruling over regions (*karshorazam*), sitting in the assembly (*vyakhanam*), thoroughly developed (*ham-raodham*), possessed of good respect (*hvapam*), delivering from distress (*anzo-buzim*), and as powerful as a hero (*hviram*). An offspring who may render my home (*nmanemcha*), my family (*visemcha*), my town - province (*zantumcha*), my country (*dakhyumcha*) and the religion of my country (*danghu-sastimcha*) prosperous."

In this verse MH displays some similarity, "May I be ever active never drowsy and dull (resting only one third of the day) watchful even when seated and at rest". He also uses different adjectives to qualify the progeny by saying, "May they be intelligent, self sustaining, guiding the Anjuman, with all round development, accomplishment, self-redeeming, superior intelligence and such progeny that would advance life at various levels and stages of self realization".

### Verse 6:

This is the last verse of prayer for human aspirations where devotee wishes for guidance to righteousness that can lead to a peaceful salvation for the soul. This is expressed by KEK in the words, "O fire, do thou grant me such knowledge, and point out such a course, so that I may perform virtuous deeds, pay homage to Ahura Mazda and lead my soul to goodness, so that after my passing away, I may obtain for my good deeds the exalted place of Heaven in return". The interpretation of TRS is similar, "good rewards as a return for prayers and long time of happiness for the soul".

MH esoterically explains "That which will remain for ever shining admonition for my betterment, a pointer to the best life of the saintly soul... May I deserve that result of my life dedicated to virtue, devotion and duty. Such is the blissful life of the soul ever-enduring".

### Verse 7:

This verse is the first of the three that speaks of the yearning of the Sacred Fire for the dedication of the devotee. The ending line according to KEK says, "...and from all he (Fire) solicits a good (*huberetimcha*), healthful (*ushtaberetimcha*) and friendly (*vantaberetimcha*) offering". TRS explains "...to seek and follow with good, shining, and loving dedication". While MH states, "...the Light Divine yearns the triple dedication of Virtue, Light, and Love". In return the fire provides religious instructions (TRS), good understanding (KEK) or a lesson (MH).

### Verse 8 and 9:

This passage asks, "...what does a walking friend bring to the sitting friend" (KEK). Generally the 'walking friend' is interpreted as a devotee while the 'sitting friend' can imply either the Holy Fire enthroned in a sacred space, or the spirit of the Divine Fire within all life forms.

As we proceed to Verse 9, we again evoke personification of the sacred element to determine what will satiate and please the Holy Fire, so it may grant the blessings to the worshippers. As KEK explains, "But if any person brings unto that Fire fuel with sincere heart or Baresma spread or the fragrant plant Hadha-naepatam unto him sanctimoniously, the Fire of Ahura Mazda being pleased, revered and satisfied gives a blessing". It is interesting to note that both TRS and MH concur, but for small differences in their phraseology.

### Verse 10:

We now come to the benedictions that Holy Fire will bestow on those who follow the moral code implied in the above verses. As KEK states, "Unto thee (i.e. in thy family) may the flock of cattle increase, may there be an increase of heroic men, may thou have an active mind, may thy life be active, and mayest thou live a joyous life". MH sums up the blessing, "possession of ample means, blessed with many worthy

sons, endowed with active and alert mind, enjoying life of larger interests". KEK states, "These are the blessings that fire endows on one who offers clean, dry fuel examined in the light and purified through righteousness".

### CONCLUSION:

Ätash Neyayesh thus emphasizes important tenets of our faith, to guide a devotee to fulfill his/her commitment to life and live by the message of Zarathushtra.

*Photo of 1500 years old fire taken by permission from  
www.pbse.com/k\_amj/throughout\_iran*

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2. Khordeh Avesta, Zoroastrian Prayer Book with Prayers in Roman Script and Translation in English by Tehmurasp Rustamji Sethna - Fourth Edition Revised - 1984.
3. My Prayer Guide, No. 1, Text in English with Interpretation by Dastur ND Minochehr-Homji, M.A., B Ed. 1362 A.Y. - 1983 A.D.

**Brigadier Ervad Behram M. Panthaki** voluntarily retired from the Indian Army after 30 years of service and immigrated to the USA in 1994. He now works as Human Resources Director at Kingsbury, a non-profit organization in Washington, D.C., that runs K-12 school for children with learning deficiencies. He is a regular guest speaker on Zarathushti religion in schools, universities and interfaith associations in the Washington, D.C. Area.



**“No scripture in the world can be understood merely by analyzing its words and its grammar: it has to be practiced. And when we live the life according to the rules laid down in a scripture we are following some Divine Messenger and we are trying to work for the Lord.”** *Dr. Iruch J S Taraporewalla*

It is believed that the extant Avesta was collected, compiled, collated and canonized during the Sassanian Era. It was during Ardashir's (commonly known as Ardashir Papakan) (226-241 CE), rule that his high priest Tansar got the scattered portions of the ancient Avesta literature collected, compiled, translated and commented upon in Pahlavi. Ardashir's son Shapur I (241-272 CE) enlarged the re-edited Avesta by collecting and incorporating with it the non-religious treatises on medicine, astronomy, geography and philosophy.

It was during the rule of Shapur II (309-379 CE), great grandson of Shapur I, that Dastur Adarbad Mahraspand, the high-priest and prime minister, brought the compilation of the Avesta to its definitive conclusion. It may not be incorrect to state that the Atash Neyayesh was put together in its present form under the aegis of Dastur Adarbad Maraspand during the Sassanian rule.

Most Neyayeshes invoke the veneration of a specific creation of Nature and are recited at a specific time. The unique feature of Atash Neyayesh is that it can be recited at any time during the day or night. This defines the nature of Fire as the Universal Omnipresent Divine Energy in the entire creation. The other distinctive features of this Neyayesh are that it has Gathic passages (Ys 33.12-14; Ys 34.4) incorporated within and like Ardivi Sura Neyayesh the main body of the text consists of older avestan yasna (Ys 62.1-10).

The Neyayesh has special significance and importance in Zarathushtrian worship. It is recited before the commencement of outer liturgical ceremonies like jashan. This litany should be recited when visiting Atash Behram or Dar-e-Meher. It can also be recited in front of a 'diva' in one's home where there is no fire burning. For many devout Zarathushtis it forms part of their daily prayers.

As per Ervad Kavasji Edulji Kanga: "This Neyaesh should be recited every day, if possible; it is enjoined otherwise in the Persian Rivayets to recite it specially on five days (Hamkaras) every month – Hormazd, Ardibehesht, Adar, Srosh and Behram".<sup>1</sup>

The main body of the liturgy can be arbitrarily divided into four sections.

- a) **Admiration, adoration and veneration of the sacred element (Verse 1-3)**
- b) **Request by devotee for guidance and blessings (Verse 4-6)**
- c) **Expected veneration and devotion to Fire from a devotee (Verse 7-9)**
- d) **Benediction and blessings from the Divine Light (Verse 10)**

Ervad Kanga, translates the last line of Verse 10 of the Neyayesh – Imat athro afrivanem yo ahmai aesmem baraiti hikush, raochas-pairishtan ashahe bereja yaozdatan – "This (is) the blessing of the Fire (for him) who brings to that (fire) dry fuel, examined in the light (and) purified with the blessings of righteousness." 2

He further amplifies "The significance of the sentence 'fuel examined in the light and purified' is that the fuel is selected after examining in the light and after removing the bark wherein small insects and polluted things may be hidden.. The fuel, sandalwood and other incense which may be put on fire should be absolutely dry and cleansed. Any kind of wet and dirty fuel should never be put on the fire. A strict order about this is enjoined in our religious books and Persian Rivayets."<sup>3</sup>

The Neyayesh unambiguously directs devotees to the awareness and care for the environment, by maintaining purity and cleanliness. The nourishment (dry fuel) that is offered to the Sacred Fire must be cleansed and free of polluting microbial matter. Thus a conscientious devotee faithful in these respects, through one's truthful dedication to the fire, - both the outer physical one and the innate Divine Fire, - is the recipient of profound benedictions.

The Neyayesh addresses certain aspects of devotee's daily life - the reverence to fire (Verse 1), to be alert and active (Verse 3), commitment to physical and spiritual evolution of oneself (Verse 4), to be industrious (Verse 5), equality of genders (Verse 5) not to be selfish and to think of others (Verse 5), to be ecologically conscious (Verse 10).

When we visit Atash Behram or Dar-e-Meher the Fire that we see in sanctum sanctorum, in its full splendor, is a constant reminder that we should remain attentive and energetic and keep our *inner fire* alive.

## NOTES:

1. Page 73 of the transliterated and translated (by Ervad Maneck Furdoonji Kanga, MA, Second Edition – 1372 Y.Z. – 2000 A.D.) version of the Gujarati Original Khordeh Avesta Ba Mayeni
2. Page 83 *ibid*
3. Foot note Page 83 *ibid*



Ervad Brigadier Behram M Panthaki (right) and Ervad Zubin P Dastoor (left) performing a jashan



## The 9th World Zoroastrian Congress

**Congress Venue:** Enchanting city of Dubai

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[www.wzcongress.org](http://www.wzcongress.org)

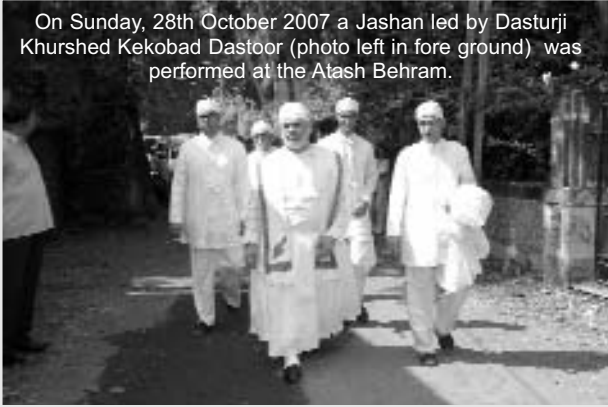
Attend the Congress and leave your  
foot prints in the sands of time

# In The News

## 265th Anniversary of Enthroning Iranshah At Udvada Celebrated With Gusto

*Historic Gathering of 3,500 Parsis at Udvada on October 28, 2007*

On Sunday, 28th October 2007 a Jashan led by Dasturji Khurshed Kekobad Dastoor (photo left in fore ground) was performed at the Atash Behram.



Sunday, 28th October saw more than 3,500 Parsi and Irani Zarathushtis bow their heads before the Holy Fire and participate in the festivities. It was an milestone event of 265th anniversary of bringing Holy Iranshah to Udvada. It was perhaps the largest gathering of Parsis in this otherwise small and serene town in South Gujarat truly a 'Chamatkaar' (miracle). 33 Buses from Mumbai, seven from Navsari, three from Surat, two from Pune and one from Ahmedabad rolled into Udvada town on Sunday morning. Many others had traveled by private vehicles and train from far off destinations

Everything was meticulously planned and executed - from organized queues for paying homage to Iranshah to travel, food and other logistics. The volunteer force and the 'Parsi Jigar' showcased its best profile.

According to traditional accounts Iranshah was first consecrated at Sanjan in 721 CE. Thereafter due to various upheavals of history, the Holy Fire had to be moved to various locations including the Bahrot Hills,



Vansda, Navsari, Surat, Valsad and finally at Udvada 265 years ago, amazingly on the same date viz. Sunday, 28th October, 1742.

Thereafter, Parsis congregated at the Sir D.M. Petit compound opposite Hotel Mek for the rest of the celebrations. Dasturji Khurshed led the Hum Bandagi after which the students of the Bai Avabai Petit School (photo left below) led by Yasmin Charna and under the able baton of Marzban Mehta sang monajats (devotional songs) and khushali na geet (songs for auspicious occasions) that made the audience clap and foot-tap away all through. The songs showcased Parsi culture and values as they rightly should be.

In his welcome address Dasturji Khurshed gave glimpses of the history of Iranshah and the difficulties that the Sanjana mobeds endured for centuries to keep Iranshah safe from marauding invaders. He added that respecting the code of conduct for elections and the laws of the land, the formal inauguration of the *Zoroastrian Information Centre* had to be postponed and will be inaugurated later. Dasturji spoke about the various veiled threats which were given to the organizers and he dared the detractors to even attempt bringing any harm to Iranshah or Udvada or to any resident of Udvada. He declared that Iranshah is safe in the hands of the nine Athornan families of Udvada Anjuman and under the leadership of both the High Priests who have been entrusted with the responsibility to serve and look after Iranshah. He asserted that no other individual, High Priest or institution has any right or authority to interfere in the affairs of Iranshah. He also assured the congregation that he had the whole hearted support of Parsis and all local residents of Udvada to improve the infrastructure and the overall development of this sacred place of pilgrimage.

Dasturji Dr. Peshotan H. Mirza's message was also read out. The function had the blessings and support of both the High Priests of Udvada as also of the Udvada Samast Anjuman.

Dadi Mistry gave a detailed overview of the work of the National Commission for Minorities. Dr Bengalee bemoaned the fact that the project report on the birth-rate of Parsis is extremely low. She also spoke about her interest and support in restoration of Udvada village and said that no one should oppose programs or projects initiated for the welfare and development of

# In The News



Guest of Honour, Dr. (Miss) Mehroo D. Bengalee (photo from left, Dinshaw Tamboly, Dr Bengalee, Minoo Shroff, Dasturji Khurshed,

Udvada. This prompted the master of ceremonies Mr Noshir H Dadrawala to urge her to prevail upon her colleagues at WAPIZ to mend their ways and refrain from placing obstacles.

Mrs. Homai N. Modi gave the formal vote of thanks and the program concluded with a gusty rendition of 'chaye hame Zarthoshty' and the Indian National Anthem. Maneck Toddywala successfully catered delicious food for more than 3,500 Parsis.

**Report by Noshir Dadrawala Abstracted from Jame Jamshed Weekly**

**Photo credits Sarosh Daruwala, Mazda Audio-Video Lab.**

## THE JOURNEY OF THE HOLY IRANSHAH

|               | Sanjan    | 669 years               |
|---------------|-----------|-------------------------|
| Bahrot Caves  | 12 years  | (1393 - 1405 ACE)       |
| Vandsa Forest | 14 years  | (1405 - 1418 ACE)       |
| Navsari       | 313 years | (1419 - 1732 ACE)       |
| Surat         | 3 years   | (1733 - 1736 ACE)       |
| Navsari       | 5 years   | (1736 - 1741 ACE)       |
| Valsad        | 1 year    | (1741 - 1742 ACE)       |
| Udvada        | 265 years | (28-10-1742 till date). |

**Iranshah was enthroned in Sanjan on  
Roz Adur, Mah Adur 721 CE  
by Dastur Nairyosang Dhaval.**

**This would make the present day  
Iranshah Fire in Udvada well over 1200 years old.**

**Source Mr Marzban Giara**



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# In The News

## **ANDREW CARNEGIE MEDAL OF PHILANTHROPY TO THE TATA FAMILY, FOR DEDICATING PRIVATE WEALTH TO PUBLIC GOOD. RATAN TATA ACCEPTS THE HONOUR.**

The Andrew Carnegie Medal of Philanthropy was inaugurated on December 10, 2001 by more than 20 of the Carnegie institutions that he established during his lifetime all over the world. This award, created at the centennial observance of Andrew Carnegie's official career as a philanthropist, is given every two years to one or more individuals who, like Andrew Carnegie, have dedicated their private wealth to public good and who have sustained an impressive career as a philanthropist. (photo right, *Ratan Tata with Hutoxi Contractor and members of ZAPA*).

The Tata Family was one of the recipients of the award. It is not surprising given that the Tata family legacy stretches back to the 19th century, when Jamsetji N. Tata started the Indian Institute of Science in Bangalore. Continuing this legacy today, the Tata trusts give away between eight to fourteen percent of the net profits from its controlling company each year to myriad causes: science, medicine, social services, health, civil society and governance, rural welfare, performing arts, education and the needs of children. Tata family funding has established pioneering institutions in social sciences, cancer research and treatment and tropical disease research. The family's philosophy of *constructive philanthropy* has become



embedded in its businesses, and has played a role in changing the traditional concept of charity throughout India. The Tata family is considered one of the few philanthropic forces in India with the potential to facilitate collaborative action on the problems that threaten individual, local and national development. Ratan Tata, who is now the Chairman of Tata Sons, continues the legacy and is a strong proponent of corporate social responsibility, striving to give his company's philanthropic initiatives focus and to build awareness of important issues such as literacy, microfinance and water conservation.

**Mr. Tata was introduced by India's president Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam. Members of the Zoroastrian Association of Pennsylvania attended the ceremony and were able to meet the recipient of the award, Mr. Ratan Tata.**

## **Zarathushtis of Richmond Virginia celebrate Naurooz/Khordad Sal on Aug. 25. in Richmond, Virginia at the home of Nancy and Sarosh Sukhia.**

The youngest member to celebrate was 14 month old Benaisha Choksi



# In The News



**Shireen Irani** (third from right front row) graduated from Baylor College of Dentistry with a degree in Doctor of Dental Surgery (D.D.S.) in May 2007. In addition to graduating in the cumulative Dean's Honor List in the upper 20 percent of her class, she received the following awards : (1) International College of Dentists Student Leadership Award, (2) American Association of Oral Biologists Award, (3) Eleanor Bushee Senior Woman Dental Student Award. She is currently pursuing a one year certificate

program in Advanced Education in General Dentistry at Baylor, followed by plans to establish her private practice in the future.

The Baylor College of Dentistry chapter of the Texas Association of Women Dentists formed a team to participate in the 23rd annual Komen Dallas Race for the Cure, which was held Oct. 15. Sponsored by the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation, the Dallas race is part of the largest series of 5K runs/fitness walks in the world.

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## DR DINA Mody

### ELECTED PRESIDENT OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF CYTOPATHOLOGY

Dr. Mody was installed as President of the American Society of Cytopathology at its annual meeting in Houston on November 4 2007 . The American Society of Cytopathology, founded in 1951, is the largest cytology organization in North America. Its membership consists of physicians, cytotechnologists and scientists who are dedicated to the cytologic method of diagnostic Pathology.

Dr. Dina R. Mody graduated from Bombay University (Seth G.S. Medical College) and did her pathology residency at Baylor College of Medicine. At Baylor she was Professor of Pathology and held the Ibrahim Ramzy Endowed Chair. Currently she is Director of the Cytopathology laboratory and Fellowship at The Methodist Hospital, and Professor of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine at Weill Medical College of Cornell University.



She has given numerous workshops, teleconferences, symposia and lectures at its national meetings. She has served on the Executive Board, the Scientific Program Committee and chaired the Quality Assurance Committee. She co-chaired the Practice Guidelines Committee, which developed the Cervical Cytology Practice Guidelines for which she received the President's Award of the ASC in 1999.

In 2002, she received the Lansky Award of the College of American Pathologists for her leadership role in cytology, and has served as Chair of the CAP Cytopathology Resource Committee.

In 2004, Dr. Mody was appointed to the Clinical Laboratory Improvement Advisory Committee (CLIAC) of the CDC . Previous leadership positions include President of the Texas Society of Cytology, and Chair of Scientific Program of the Houston Society of Clinical Pathologists.

November 2007-2008

# In The News



## Dr Dhun Noria

appointed to the prestigious University Health Network Board of Trustees, Toronto, Ontario

Dr Noria chief of Laboratory Medicine at the The Scarborough Hospital, is also on the Board of Yee Hong Centre for Geriatric Care and has been the Chair of Metro Toronto District Health Council.

She brings to her new position a vast experience in quality care, and regional planning

Dr Noria was the chair of the gala banquet for the 14th North American Congress.

**Congratulations Dr Dun Noria**

## FORMER PRESIDENT OF INDIA ABDUL KALAM RECEIVES HONORARY DEGREE FROM CARNEIGE MELLON CARNEIGE UNIVERSITY, PA



Academic convocation of Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam-former President of India received the honorary degree of doctor of science & technology at the Carnegie Mellon University Pittsburgh Pa. Picture on left with members of the Zoroastrian Association of Pennsylvania (ZAPA) Farhad Contractor, Homi Bodhanwala, and Houtoxi Contractor.

## Daisy Presswalla receives Humanitarian Award from Asian American Society of Central Virginia.

On Wednesday, October 3, 2007, the Asian American Society of Central Virginia (AASOCV) held its First Asian American Gala in the Marble Hall of Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond, Virginia. Daisy Presswalla was awarded the Humanitarian Award for her services to the community in the Greater Richmond area. Daisy and her husband, Farouk, are long standing ZAGNY members although they now reside in Richmond. Congratulations Daisy, for a well-deserved award. The award was accepted by Marj Mohta on behalf of Daisy, who was unable to attend.

Rumy Mohta, Chairman of the Board of the AASOCV, highlighted the achievements of the Society during the last 10 years in the service of the Central Virginia community. The Gala was attended by Secretary of State Kate Hanley, Secretary of Technology Aneesh Chopra, Dep. Sec. of Finance Manju Ganeriwala, Del. Frank Hall, other Govt. officials, many local celebrities and compeered by the local CBS News Anchor, Minnie Roh.



From left : Sarosh Sukhia Nancy Sukhia Rumy Mohta Marj Mohta Homi Gandhi Homi Modi

# In The News



## **Welcoming Committee for New Zarathushti Immigrants** **Ontario Zoroastrian Community Foundation** **Working Together to Serve the Community**

The OZCF Welcoming Committee was formed in March 2006 and is committed to providing guidance and to help all immigrants in the greater Toronto area attain self-sufficiency in Canadian society as soon as possible. It provides assistance upon arrival, help in finding residence, schooling requirements, help and guidance in community services, job search, provides links to various government assistance programs, and helps meet the changing needs of a diverse ethno-cultural community while encouraging the full growth and development of our Zarathushtis.

At OZCF, we understand that hope means different things to different people. By filling people's lives with hope, we're helping build a strong and prosperous community. OZCF provides the means to a brighter future.

The Primary objective of our committee is to make every effort to ensure that individuals from every corner of the world are provided support and assistance to help them settle down into Canadian Society with equal access to our services. Welcome to Canada!

### **OZCF Welcoming Committee**

**Meher Panthaky – Chairperson, Jal Panthaky, Havovi Bharda, Sam Bharda, Sahavir Bharucha, Sherry Bharucha, Aspi Illava**

**FOR FURTHER INQUIRIES** welcomer@ozcf.com - Website: [www.ozcf.com](http://www.ozcf.com)

### **President Vladimir Putin of Russia,**

**I**n an interview with IRNA Information Agency and the Iranian State Television and Radio on October 16, 2007 references Zarathushti religion (during his recent state visit to Iran) as the religion that first emerged on Russian soil - in the southern Urals and also believes that the Zarathushti religion was the source from which Judaism, Christianity and Islam, later sprung.

“ Even part of the former Soviet Union was part of ancient Iran's territory. Iran is the home of early religions, of Zoroastrianism, and some specialists think that this was the source from which Judaism, Christianity and Islam would later spring. But now there is evidence suggesting that Zoroastrianism first emerged on Russian soil -- in the southern Urals -- and that population migrations took this religious culture to other places, including to Iran ”.

**SOURCE** <http://mrzine.monthlyreview.org/putin171007.html>

### **MOHTA INVITED TO JOIN TRADE MISSION OF VIRGINIA GOVERNOR KAINE TO INDIA**

In April 2007, a delegation of Virginia business leaders and economic development officials returned after their mission to India with proposals to generate investment and jobs in Virginia. Governor Tim Kaine had to stay behind as he coordinated the state's response to the Virginia Tech tragedy. Trade & Commerce Secretary Patrick Gottschalk and Information Technology Secretary Aneesh Chopra led the trade mission in the absence of Governor Tim Kaine.

IT, manufacturing, and service industry company representatives also accompanied the trade mission group. Business leaders who were invited to join the trip by the Governor, included Rummy Mohta, who represented his two companies, Rites LLC & Richmond Travels LLC. This was Mohta's second invitation to join the Virginia Economic Development Partnership and the Governor on a trade mission to India and Asia.

# In The News

## **SIX YEAR OLD ARYA JAMAJI WINS FIRST PRIZE FOR BEST COSTUME FROM RECYCLABLE AND BIODEGRADABLE MATERIALS**

On November 1, 2007, six year old, Arya Jamaji and her best friend Stephanie from Singapore won the first prize for the best costume made out of recyclable & biodegradable materials at an environment conservation parade organized by the Jane Goodall Institute. Their costumes had to reflect an endangered species. Arya dressed up as the *Black Asia Hornbill* and her friend Stephanie was an *Isabella Oriole*. Over 1000 students from all over Singapore took part in the parade.

They were called up on stage to be with Dr Jane Goodall for the evening and received a prize from her

*(photo right Arya Jamaji on left, Stephanie on right, Dr Jane Goodall in background)*



## **Zarathushti Brings Crowds to Their Feet**

**CYRUS BAHRASSA** (17), a Senior and the Student Body President of Little Rock Central High School, delivered a powerful speech at the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the integration of Central High in Little Rock, Arkansas, and received a standing ovation from an audience of 4,500. Cyrus also spoke the previous day at the opening and dedication of the new Central High School National Historic Site Museum and Visitor Center, and that speech also drew a standing ovation from nearly 2,000 people.

Fifty years ago, on September 25th, 1957, President Dwight Eisenhower ordered troops of the 101st Airborne Division to escort 9 black students into Little Rock Central High School and protect them for their first full day of class. Among the dignitaries that attended the commemoration ceremony were former President Bill Clinton and his wife Sen. Hillary Clinton (both of whom embraced him at the ceremony after his speech), President Eisenhower's granddaughter Susan Eisenhower, the Rev. Jesse Jackson, Arkansas Gov. Mike Beebe, and several other officials.

To see the event online and hear the speech, go to <http://www.katv.com/news/stories/0907/458374.html> and click on Cyrus Bahrassa's speech.

*Cyrus is the son of proud parents Drs. Feraydoon Bahrassa and Persis Shroff and brother of Farhad and Nazneen. (see FJ FALL 2007 page 68)*



# In The News

## **Z**arathushtis in the media in international campaign against HIV/AIDS

A Canadian - South African co-production - The Three Amigos

A series of twenty Public Service Announcements (PSA's) spots designed to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS, have found a new home on *Bindass*, the youth channel from UTV cable (India) . Bindass is playing this animated condom spot ten times a day, making a substantial contribution towards stopping the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Says Zarina Mehta, CEO Bindass, "We are very excited about The Three Amigos broadcasting on Bindass. These spots support India's efforts to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS and we believe that these engaging messages will substantially contribute to encouraging responsible behavior amongst our youth audience."

This international campaign is a Canadian-South African co-production involving a large volunteer effort from over 80 international animation professionals. Indian-born Zarathushti **Firdaus Kharas of Canada** is the director and producer.

Firdaus Kharas adds, "I am absolutely delighted to have Bindass as our broadcaster in India. Their target audience is perfect for this campaign and I salute their contribution towards stopping the spread of this deadly disease in India. Already India has well over 5 million HIV positive people, a number that is expected to grow significantly. Bindass is literally saving lives by donating their airtime to play this campaign."

**Source** :Televisionpoint.com Correspondent | Mumbai

<http://www.televisionpoint.com/news2007/newsfullstory.php?>

## **TEN YEAR OLD KYRUS BUCHIA RECITES AVESTA PRAYER FOR REACE IN HOUSTON FOR A P J ABDUL KALAM, FORMER PRESIDENT OF INDIA**

Ten-year old Kyrus Buchia recited an invocation on Thursday, October 22, 2007, at the India House, Houston, Texas. The occasion was a sponsored luncheon to honor former President A P J Abdul Kalam of India. A gathering of over 500 people heard the recitation of the Avesta fakra, "The Zoroastrian Prayer for Peace" with an English translation. .

The Avesta fakra was chosen by Peshotan Unwalla of Houston, Texas.

### **ZARATHUSHTI PRAYER FOR PEACE**

*vainît ahmi nmâne sraoshô asrushîm âkhshtish an-âkhshtîm râitish arâitîm ârmaitish tarômaîtîm arshukhdhô vâxsh mithaokhtem vâchim asha-drujem.*

### **Translation**

"We pray to God to eradicate all the misery in the world: that understanding triumph over ignorance, that generosity triumph over indifference, that trust triumph over contempt, and that truth triumph over falsehood. And there always be peace on earth."

When Kyrus asked for his photograph to be taken with the President, Kalam made him sit on his lap for the picture.(photo below)

In 2006, Kyrus, accompanied by his parents went to India to become a navar. It was at this time he magnanimously turned over his entire "pehramnis" (monetary gift envelopes) to the education fund of Arzan Karanjia, the son of the officiating priest Pervaz Karanjia of India.



# In The News

## Congratulations to all residents of Dadar Parsi Colony

Mancherji Joshi Dadar Parsi Colony has won the TIMES OF INDIA **GLORY OF MUMBAI AWARD for the year 2007**. It is adjudged as the **BEST COLONY** in the Environmental Management Category.

The objective of the awards instituted by the The Times of India was to laud the efforts of residential societies in making Mumbai a great place to live in. More than 1,400 applications were received from Mumbai, Navi Mumbai and Thane.

Mancherji Edulji Joshi, Bombay municipal corporator 1935-1952, was the architect of this beautiful garden colony, which he built to alleviate the housing problems of the community. With active co-operation of his assistants he "clothed the wilderness of Dadar with the gorgeous mantle of gardens and beautiful structures now teaming with life and activity", write famous Parsi historian J. R. B. Jeejeebhoy as an introduction to the Silver Jubilee Souvenir of Dadar Matunga Parsi Zoroastrian Association in 1950. (There were tigers mauling Parsi residents as late as in 1863 in the area which is now Dadar Parsi Colony).

Credit for the efforts to keep the colony clean and green and participate in Advanced Locality Management (ALM) go to Zareen Engineer, Silloo Limboowalla, Silloo Marker and Mithoo Jesia. Mancherji Edalji Joshi Colony Residents' Association (MEJCRA) regularly brings out newsletters and participates in meetings with Municipal Ward officials..

Source Marzban Giara.

source: Parsi Statues by Marzban J. Giara



*Inscription : (West side panel) (In Gujarati)*  
**Mancherji Edulji Joshi L.C.E., M.I.E., I.P.**  
*Principal Founder of the*  
*Dadar Parsi Colony and Parsi Housing Society*  
*Municipal Corporator &*  
*President of Dadar Matunga Parsi Zoroastrian Association*  
*This statue has been erected by his Parsi friends*  
*and admirers in appreciation of his services*  
*24th April 1938*

*(East side panel)*  
*Erected in appreciation of his Services*  
*By His Parsi Friends and Admirers*  
*Unveiled by*  
*Sir Hormusji Cowasji Dinshaw Adenwala Kt. M.V.O.; O.B.E.*  
*24th April 1938*

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# In The News

## **PAUL KRIWACZEK DELIGHTS THE AUDIENCE WITH HIS WIT AND KNOWLEDGE ON THE IMPACT ZARATHUSHTRA'S MESSAGE HAS ON THE WORLD'S RELIGIOUS THOUGHT**

On October 19th and 21st Paul Kriwaczek, delighted a packed audience of over 100 people at the Zoroastrian Heritage and Cultural Centre, Houston, with his easy, warm and animated delivery of the Message of Zarathushtra. People had come from all over the State of Texas, from New Orleans, from Maryland and from Canada. They were not disappointed. The library committee had ordered his book "In Search of Zarathushtra, the first prophet and the ideas that changed the World", for purchase and for book signing. They were all sold out on the first evening. The book has been translated into several languages including Farsi and Turkish.

**On Friday 19th** Paul talked informally of his travel experiences across Central Asia and Iran – the Land of Zarathushtra. How he started his life as a dentist in 1962, worked in Afghanistan for 2 years, and traveled to India which profoundly changed

his thinking on the role of religion in people's life. Even though in those early days he knew very little about religion he nevertheless felt that the Islam as practiced in Iran was not the same as practiced in other Muslim nations. There was a difference which he did not understand then. Later he realized that the ideas and teachings of Zarathushtra had shaped the practice of Islam in Iran among the people of that country

He then joined the BBC as a specialist in Central and South Asian Affairs, and later BBC television as a producer of documentaries, for which he has won numerous awards. He now writes for pleasure. He is working on another book, Babylon and the Birth of Civilisation. His book Yiddish Civilisation was short-listed for a major literary prize.

**On Sunday 21st**, Paul gave a thought-provoking talk on how different religions have evolved and rubbed off on each other, and at times antagonized each other.



Religions need a geography and a history to thrive. The audience travelled with him through the different time periods tracing the \*influence of the teachings of Zarathushtra on Judeo-Christian thought, on Islam and on Iranian Islam in particular, on modern day Shiism in Iran. In turn the religion as preached by Zarathushtra was also influenced by other religions. He described the way in which Zarathushtra was held in the

highest honor by ancient Greek philosophers, how the Greek mathematician Pythagoras was supposed to have studied with Him, how the Renaissance painter Raphael included Him in a wall-painting for the Pope's palace in Rome, and how even the composer Mozart introduced Him into his opera The Magic Flute – as the character Sorastro.

He concluded by saying that the time is NOW for the Zarathushti deen to assert itself in the world. And even though history is written by the victors, Zoroastrianism will shape our world and His message will live forever. "And What is Macedonia (of Alexander) now? Just a former Yugoslav Republic!!!" The Prophet Zarathushtra is unique not because of his antiquity but for what he preached.

And in spite of everything, Zarathushtra still lives. And Kriwaczek was not referring to the 4,000 year old religion but its persistent influence in the modern world. Zarathushtra will be remembered as "the great moral teacher of humanity".

The Library committee chaired by Aban Rustomji needs to be congratulated for organizing this excellent lecture series as their Fifth Annual Library event.

***Dolly Dastoor***  
***FEZANA Journal***

# In The News

## HOUSTON ZOROASTRIAN RETIREMENT COMMUNITY

On September 23rd, 2007 the first meeting for the presentation of the proposed Houston Zoroastrian Retirement Community was held at the Zarthushti Heritage and Cultural Center in Houston, Texas.

The presentation was made by Noshir Challa and Kersi Engineer, who will be developing this proposed retirement community.

Following are some brief details about the proposed Houston Zoroastrian Retirement Community (HZRC):

1. **LOCATION:** The project will be located on approx. 1.5 acres of land adjacent to the ZHCC property, which is currently owned by Noshir and Khurshid Challa. This tract of land will have a common boundary along the western boundary of the ZHCC property, in other words it is located to the west of the ZHCC property.
2. **NUMBER OF HOUSING UNITS:** The current proposal is to build 16 residential units in two sections of 8 units each.
3. **SIZE AND DESCRIPTION OF THE UNITS:** The proposal is to build single story town homes consisting of two bedroom and two full bathrooms. The approximate size of each unit will be 1000-1,200 square feet. Each town home will have a small enclosed patio in the rear. The units will be designed for senior citizen lifestyle.
4. **PRICE OF EACH UNIT:** The purchase price of each unit has not been determined yet, however, our goal will be to keep the price under \$100,000. The price will be determined once we have finalized the

design of the project and a Builder to build the project for us. The price will be determined by the type of exterior and interior finishes that are ultimately chosen for construction. The price of the units will reflect the actual cost of construction of the project and some reserves to be set aside for the HOA. **THE DEVELOPERS ARE NOT GOING TO MAKE ANY PROFIT FROM THIS PROJECT.**

5. **AMENITIES:** The project will be fenced and will have access control gates. There will be landscaping and small common areas and maybe some other common facilities may be added in the future. One covered parking space will be provided for each unit. A homeowners Association will be formed with the operations rules and regulations of this project. The HOA will be managed by the Developers, an elected representative of the homeowners, and two other members appointed by Noshir and Khurshid Challa to make a total of five members.
6. **SALE PROCESS:** The units will only be built if they are all pre-sold. Each potential buyer will be required to pay a deposit to reserve the unit and three subsequent payments as the development project progresses. The allocation of the units will be done in the sole discretion of the developers. Units will be sold on a "first come first basis" with preference given to ZAH and local Zoroastrians, however, the final decision will be made by a Board that will be established, in

the case where the project is over subscribed. Construction will not commence until all units are pre-sold. If this does not happen, any deposits received will be returned in full.

7. **WHAT THIS PROJECT IS NOT:** It is not a nursing home or an assisted living project. It is a private non-profit project and will not be affiliated with the ZAH. It is also not a real estate investment; rather it is amenity being provided to the Zoroastrian Seniors to have a safe, comfortable and affordable living environment near the Houston Heritage and Cultural Center.

**\*\* All information contained herein is for discussion purposes only, and is subject to change without Notice \*\***

This meeting was attended by about 20 senior citizens that live in Houston and from those attending; about 8 senior citizens have shown an interest in purchasing a unit in this community. We have also received interest from retired Zarathushtis living in Austin, Oklahoma and California. At the current time we are inviting Zarathushtis who might have an interest in such a project to contact us, so we can gauge the level of interest.

**If you are interested and wish to receive further information, please contact Kersi Engineer at (713) 553-5151 or [zzkersizz@aol.com](mailto:zzkersizz@aol.com) or Noshir Challa at (713)-725-8123 or [NKSSC@aol.com](mailto:NKSSC@aol.com).**

# In The News

## Headlines

### **Chicago Tribune**

[http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/local/chi-zoroastrians\\_15oct15,0,5434003.story](http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/local/chi-zoroastrians_15oct15,0,5434003.story)

Keeping their faith's flame lit

By Ron Grossman

Special report coverage on Zoroastrianism in the context of the NextGenNow conference in Chicago.

Print circulation: 566,827

Oct. 15, 2007

### **Albany Times Union**



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# INTERFAITH INTERALIA

## FAITH RESPONSES TO CLIMATE CHANGE

*Midday NGO Workshop - A point of View – ZARATHUSHTRIAN FAITH*

*Thursday, 6 September, 2007*

*Presented by Homi D. Gandhi - FEZANA NGO Main Representative to  
the UN in Consultation with ECOSOC*

*yâ-varanâ âpô  
yâ- varanâ urvarâ yâ-varanâ gâushî hūdâ yâvaranô  
ahurô mazdâ yê gâim dādâ yê narem ashavanem  
yâvaranô as  
zarathushtrô yâvaranô kavâ vîshtâspô yâvaranâ  
ferashaoshtrâ  
jâmâspâ yâvaranô kascî saoshyañtâm haithyâvarežâm  
ashâunâm  
tâ varenâcâ tkâêshâcâ (râspî) mazdayasnô ahmî*

**"Of what faith are the waters**

**Of what faith the trees**

**Of what faith the bounteous mother earth**

**Of what faith Ahura Mazda**

**Of what faith was Zarathushtra**

**Of that faith and of that law as well,**

**a Mazda worshiper am I "(Yasna 12.7)**

Zarathushtra, prophet-priest of the world's oldest revealed religion, expressed his teachings in poetic verses, Gathas. Zarathushtra recognizes Ahura Mazda as the creator of the entire universe, the one who "laid down paths for sun and stars", who made the moon to wax and wane, who "holds the earth and sky apart", who "keeps the waters and the plants in place", who "fashioned the realms of light and dark", and who "created the dawn and day and night". Gathas (Yasna 44.2-6).

To understand what has been stated in the Zarathushtrian scriptures, let me describe Zarathushtrian theology with a particular reference to the relationship between Ahura Mazda and His creation.

Zarathushtrian theology is developed in terms of the Amesha Spentas, the "Bountiful Immortals". These are six abstract concepts, essences or aspects of Ahura Mazda, the divinity, through which He is known. They are also personalized in the style of religious poetry of the times; each of the six Amesha Spentas is associated with one of the seven creations of Ahura Mazda.

• *Asho Vahishta is the highest (best) truth*, also the highest form of righteousness. The truth describes how the

world ought to be in its ideal form. Asha Vahishta is associated with fire.

• *Vohu Manah (or Bahman) is the Good Mind*. The mental capacity to comprehend Asha, to understand the nature of our actual world, and recognize the resulting disparity between the ideal and the real. Vohu Manah is associated with the animal kingdom.

• *Spenta Armaiti (or Aspandarmad) is Holy Devotion*. Theologically, it is the attitude of piety and devotion toward the source of being and the ultimate truth. Ethically, it is the attitude of benevolence, a concern for the good. It may be characterized as right-mindedness. Spenta Armaiti is associated with the earth.

• *Kshathra Vairya (or Sherever) is Divine Strength and Power, leading to the Ideal Dominion*, the ideal social (and political) structure of the human world. In human terms it is the ideal society. In theological terms, it is the kingdom of heaven. Kshathra Vairya is associated with the sky and later metals.

• *Haurvatat (or Khordad) is the state of complete well-being, physical and spiritual integrity*. In its full form it is a state of perfection on earth. Haurvatat is associated with the waters.

• *Ameretat (or Amardad) is the state of immortal bliss*. Ameretat is associated with the plant kingdom.

Through Vohu Manah (the good mind) Armaiti (love and devotion), and by following the path of Asha (truth and righteousness), one strives to bring about Kshathra Vairya (the ideal dominion), where ultimately at the time of Frashokereti (the final resurrection), all evil will perish; only Haurvatat (Perfection) and Ameretat (immortality) will prevail. In this cosmic drama, man is not a bystander. He is rather the prime agent through whose actions the promise of Ahura Mazda will be fulfilled.

This is not a religious vision directed toward offering comfort of personal spiritual rest or social integration, but one of responsibility demanded of each one of us. As Zarathushtra says: "May we be like those who bring the world toward perfection" (Yasna 30.9).

The Zarathushti book of creation Bundahishn (a sixth century Pahlavi text) regards plants and vegetation as the fourth creation of Ahura Mazda, after the heavens, the earth and the waters. The importance of the plant



# INTERFAITH NTERALIA

*Religions Working for Peace and Justice*

kingdom is reflected as one notices the relationship of the Zarathushtrian myth to the very genesis of mankind through this creation.

## HOW THE ZARATHUSHTI FAITH HAS RESPONDED TO THE CLIMATE CHANGE THROUGH THE CENTURIES?

Professor John Hinnells, the founding head for the new department of the Study of Religions at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, has described Zarathushtrian religion as the world's first ecologically conscious religion. He further states, "Their moral values and daily practices have changed but little over millennia and continents. Foremost is the duty to care for the Good Creation, humanity, the physical and animal worlds."

Veneration of the elements of nature (fire, the sun and sky, the waters, the earth) and promoting a mutually beneficial existence with all of Ahura Mazda's creations, is essential to Zarathushtra's teachings. This gives the Zarathushti religion added relevance in our modern ecologically conscious times. The religion of Zarathushtra holds nature and all of Ahura Mazda's creations sacred and entrusts man with their stewardship. It stresses the harmony of both the minog (spiritual) and getig (material) aspects of creation, providing a holistic approach to life. So, there is retribution for those who do not promote Asha, as is written in the Zarathushtrian scriptures.

**Whoever proves himself better than the good  
And helps Creation on its upward march,  
Through Mazda's strength our master he  
becomes;  
But whosoever fosters not our Mother Earth  
Behaves far worse than any of the bad,  
He meets his retribution at the end.**

**---Yasna 51.6**

Zarathushtrian theology and rituals celebrate and nurture all life. Reverence, care and compassion for the earth and all its creations are inculcated through the theology of the Amesha Spentas. At the basis of many ancient Zarathushtrian purity laws, many of which can now be viewed as sensible and practical hygiene rules, is an intense passion for taking care of all of God's material creations, and ensuring that they are not defiled or

polluted. Prayers and rituals are offered not for appeasement, but in the spirit of an embracing respect for nature and man's place therein.

Zarathushtra makes a reference to the existence of two worlds, minog – the perfect, absolute, divine world, which is beyond defilement, and getig, the physical world, the one that is corrupted by the undesirable choices of man. The two together make up the complete creation, the world in which we are living today.

## CURRENT STATUS AND WHAT WE SHOULD DO?

Ever since the first well-researched document on the Ecological Crisis (The Historical Roots of our Ecological Crisis by L White) was published in 1967, our planet has gone from bad to worse. There are plenty of national and international reports, full with statistics and warnings of "doomsday", and so I will not repeat them here. The advanced developed world has exploited all they can and are now trying to find "band-aid" approaches to correct or reverse the situation. Consider the impact of industrial, agricultural and other uncontrolled expansion in the developing countries, including its impact on vulnerable populations, water security, land use, and the politics of energy. There is a "time bomb" ticking on the hands of the humanity today.

According to experts and scientists, some of the worst-case scenarios can be avoided by acting swiftly and decisively at every level of the decision-making process by educating communities of the importance of reducing carbon emissions, encouraging fuel conservation, and the search for energy-efficient alternative fuel sources. Determination of the best practices and the acceptance of recommended international standards of behavior will help. This will also equip NGOs with the skills to form effective partnerships and create viable action plans to carry their efforts forward.

**THIS IS NOT ENOUGH.** Essays are written by school children, teachers, professors, etc. as to what is the problem, how should we approach the solution, etc. The theme/rhetoric of all these writings is the same: ADULTS BE RESPONSIBLE.

We have to think outside the box. As global citizens, and for the sake of generations to come, we all have a responsibility to find concrete solutions and to implement effective, everyday, and meaningful measures. It is not too late to influence the present and plan for a safer and



more sustainable future. We have to raise supplementary issues, share solutions and best practices, and foster partnerships across all sectors of civil society.

#### MY SUGGESTIONS:

1. We have to work towards producing the alternatives which are going to reverse the process and which will be available at 50 % of the present cost of the current resources we consume, be it energy, water, natural products.

2. It should be the mandatory duty of each sovereign government to work towards that objective. In free society, sometimes this is not possible because of vote catching techniques employed by all candidates. In that case, it may be that another branch of government (in case of some countries, Judiciary) may intervene for the generation yet to be borne. Recent decisions of the Supreme Court of India in such environmental cases have shown the community that there is an interest of unborn generation in many of the issues we are selfishly deciding for our pocket books. Also Japanese Government and bureaucracy have taken a lead in establishing the conservation and regeneration laws and rules, albeit a little expensive way for the developing world.

3. The corporate sector should understand that conservation and regeneration are essential to their bottom line. The House of Tatas in India has displayed this for over a century by acting as a role model. Another example is the Kirin Brewery Co. of Japan. Both of these examples have sent a clear message to other corporate enterprises that the benefits of conservation and regeneration far outweigh the higher costs. The governments can also spear head such policies, if necessary, by following them as role models and by influencing other corporations by legislation offering carrots and sticks.

4. Finally, and this is probably the most important because it concerns us all. Every religion believes in conservation and passing on a better world to the next generation. We should be a good influence by role modeling our communities in this process of conservation and regeneration. **WE CAN AND WE SHOULD.**

**Acknowledgements:** *"The Legacy of Zarathushtra", a FEZANA publication, edited by Roshan Rivetna; . "Perspectives on Ecology : From Zoroastrian Scriptures to Global Realities" by Dr. Homi Dhalla, a comprehensive paper delivered as part of FUREC's Distinguished Lecture Series, Hinnells, J. R., Zoroastrianism and the Parsis.*

Homi Gandhi is the FEZANA NGO Main Representative to the UN in Consultation with ECOSOC.

He is the President of ZAGNY.

The FEZANA Team at the UN, photo from left, Houtoxi Contractor, Farhad Cama, Homi Gandhi, Meher Amersey and Nilufer Randeria





# MAHATMA GANDHI'S INSPIRATION NEEDED NOW MORE THAN EVER, SECRETARY-GENERAL BAN KI- MOON SAYS IN MESSAGE TO MARK FIRST INTERNATIONAL DAY OF NON-VIOLENCE OCTOBER 2, 2007

*Religions Working for Peace and Justice*

*"The United Nations was created in the hope that humanity could not only end wars, it could eventually make them unnecessary. Our founders hoped that the Organization could help stop violence by spreading a culture of peace, promoting tolerance and advancing human dignity.*

*These same ideals sum up the legacy of Mahatma Gandhi, whose birthday we celebrate today. His peaceful struggles against unjust regimes in South Africa and India captured the world's imagination. And his incorporation of non-violence into everyday life inspired countless individuals to lead better, more meaningful lives.*

*"Non-violence is the first article of my faith. It is also the last article of my creed," was the Mahatma's response when charged with agitation against the State in 1922.*

*The Mahatma's inspiration is needed now more than ever. All around us, we see communities increasingly mired in rising intolerance and cross-cultural tensions. We see extremist dogma and violent ideologies gaining ground, as moderate forces retreat.*

*Recently, we have witnessed lethal force being used against unarmed and non-violent marchers who exemplified the very spirit of the Mahatma's teachings.*

*Today, there is a great need to address these trends and to promote true tolerance and non-violence at every level, from the individual all the way up to the State.*

*The International Day of Non-violence can help advance this effort. May it help spread Mahatma Gandhi's message of non-violence to an ever wider audience, and hasten a time when every day is a day of non-violence.*

<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs//2007/sgsm11198.doc.htm>

## UN-NGO Workshop and conference on Climate Change

September 2007

Press releases and advertisement appeared in the brochure at the UN, DPI/NGO meeting Sept 07. in English and in Farsi on Climate Change.(see pg 66) The Farsi translation were done with the help of Erv Soli Dastur { Sarasota, Florida}, Mobed Mehraban Firoozgary {Tehran, Iran} , Farzad Aidun {Potomac, Maryland} and Parviz Kalantari {Southern California} Roshan Rivetna provided the image of the sarv from Persepolis which was used in the Farsi document.. A French translation was also provided with the help of Hormazdyar Nekoo, a professional translator, Quebec City, Quebec., Canada.



Connect • Collaborate • Change our World

*"Celebrating 50th: 60 years with the United Nations-The Journey Continues"*

With best wishes from:

The Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America

*"Of what faith are the waters  
Of What faith the trees  
Of what Faith the boundless mother earth  
Of What faith Adam Mazda  
Of what faith was Zarathushtra  
Of that faith and of that love we will  
in Mazda worshipper join" (Yasna 27)*

Founded in 1957 and currently celebrating 50 years, FEZANA serves as the coordinating body for 29 Zoroastrian associations and 12 associate member groups throughout the United States and Canada. In our faith and tradition we believe it is our duty to work for justice and to bridge the gap between the sacred and the secular in our world.

Visit us at [www.fezana.org](http://www.fezana.org)



# INTERFAITH INTERALIA

Religions Working for Peace and Justice



بر پایه کدام باوری هستند ایها

بر پایه کدام باوری هستند ترختها

بر پایه کدام باوری هستند ملایر زمین

بر پایه کدام باوری هستند شوررشت و مزنا

بر پایه همان باورها و داد و آیین مرتیسواهمی مرتیسو زرتشتیش (پستنا 12 بند 7)

بزرگان دین زرتشتی در روزهای 14 الی 16 شهریورماه درباره بحث و گفتگو پیرامون تغییرات وضع آب و هوا در شصتمین برنامه سالانه سازمان ملل گرد هم می آیند

هدایش به منظور سازگاری در واقعیت های علمی بر مسائل تغییرات جوی و پیامدهای آن بر مردم بومی، حفظ نمایرایی، استفاده از زمین - سیاست مصرف نیرو و غیره

انجمن زرتشتیان امریکای شمالی FEZANA در روز پنجم شهریور اعلام نمود که گروهی از رهبران جامعه زرتشتی و بین انهایی که از شهرهای نیوجرسی و پیتزبورگ و حتی از مسمی هندوستان به جمع بیش از 2000 نمایندگان سازمانهای غیر دولتی از 80 کشور جهان در نیویورگ خواهند پیوست و سخنرانی خواهند نمود.

زرتشتیان شرکت کننده شامل حامد تیلور راترپا از مسمی هندوستان آقای همی گاندی از گن راک نیوجرسی و خاتم هوتغشی از کتراقتر و آقای سیروس کاما از پیتزبورگ پتیلوانیا خواهند بود. سازمان فزانا جایگاه مشاوره ای با بخش ESCO SQL را دارا میباشد.

گرددمایی فوق بمنظور پیگیری و تلاش در جلوگیری از گرم تر شدن نمای زمین و جو آن میباشد. این مسائل از ده سال پیش پیگیری گردیده و کشورهای عضو سازمان ملل اعلامنامه و چهارچوب حفظ محیط زیست UNFCCC را پایه گذاری کردند.

در بین یکی از برنامه های کارگاہی، آقای همی گاندی نحوه برخورد زرتشتیان را به این امر مهم مطرح خواهد نمود

در طول هزاران سال زرتشتیان جهان به جهت علاقمندی در حفظ و پاک نگه داشتن زمین و محیط زیست، پیروی از آن را جزئی از وظایف دینی خود دانسته و به انجام آن همت گماشته اند. آقای گاندی کوشش خواهد نمود تا این امر را به منظور جهانی نمودن در گفتگوها بگماشد.

برای اطلاعات بیشتر در رابطه با جلسه فوق به تارنمای <http://unegodpicconference.org> مراجعه نمایید.

دین زرتشتی بیش از 1500 سال قبل از میلاد مسیح پایه گذاری شد و قتییکترین دین یکتا شناسی شناخته میشود. بر دین و آیین باور بهریمان مانند علیه نیکی بر بدی - جاردانگی روح و تیار باورها را گذاشت. این باورها سپس به مسیحیت و اسلام نیز وارد شد. دین و کیش زرتشتی در زمان هخامنشیان - پارت ها و ساسانیان در سر تا سر ایران زمین و حتی فراق گسترش یافت. زرتشتیان مهاجران ایران و پارسیان - زرتشتیانی که سده های پیش از ایران به هندوستان مهاجرت نمودند، جامعه

در رابطه با FEZANA

در سال 1987 پایه گذاری شد و در همانندگ نمودن 25 انجمن های ایالت های مختلف امریکای شمالی و کتفا فعالیت مینماید. این سازمان در پیشبرد آموزش و درک دانش دینی و در برگزاری آیین های دینی زرتشتی فعالیت مینماید. همچنین برنامه های جیرحوافه را در سراسر دنیا انجام میدهد. مجله انتشار یافته توسط این انجمن در خانه های اعلای بیش از 22 کشور و همچنین بین دانشمندان و دانش پژوهان بخش میشود. جهت اطلاعات بیشتر به آدرس تارنمای [www.fezana.org](http://www.fezana.org) مراجعه شود.

فازاد به نام تصویر روبرو در دسترس می باشد



لطفا برای اطلاعات بیشتر با آقای فرید یدون [farzad.aidun@gmail.com](mailto:farzad.aidun@gmail.com) تماس بگرید

**High Level Dialogue on Inter-Religious and Inter-Cultural Understanding Follows the Declaration of an International Day of Non-Violence at the United Nations**

**By: Behram Pastakia, Bethesda, Maryland, USA**

Yasna 30.9

The 4th and 5th of October 2007 saw a **High Level Dialogue on Inter-Religious and Inter-Cultural Understanding** at UN headquarters in the General Assembly Hall, based on resolution 61.221 proposed by the delegations from Pakistan and the Philippines. The two day event came on the heels of the declaration of the international day of non-violence by the United Nations on 2nd October 2007. The UN was created to spread a culture of peace and promote respect for “the other”. The message of M.K. Gandhi who espoused these self same values, [“My life is my message”] served as an inspiration to the world community. At a Plenary session of the General Assembly, Secretary General Ban Ki-moon in his address on the first commemoration of the

These sentiments were echoed in the inter-religious dialogue, in the afternoon of the 4th October, where in addition to extolling Gandhi's espousal of truth and non-violence, Lord Mahavira's contributions on the understanding on the nature of truth, "Anekantavada" were presented. Speakers highlighted a key issue: the importance of promoting interfaith and intrafaith dialogue. An intervention from the floor by the representative of Egypt during the panel discussion moderated by William F. Vendley, Secretary-General for the World Conference of Religions for Peace, was particularly instructive. The exchange dealt with bringing into a dialogue those at the extreme fringes of opinion within the different faith traditions. If we choose to ignore those considered "extremists" within our own faith tradition, then who is to engage them in purposeful dialogue? Our own Zarathushtrian scriptures speak to this need to prevent bloodshed:

**[Yasna 46.5 - The Gathas of Zarathushtra;  
Hymns in Praise of Wisdom - translation by Piloo  
Nanavutty]**

# INTERFAITH INTERALIA

*Religions Working for Peace and Justice*

At the plenary sessions on the following day, delegates emphasized the responsibility of the media in promoting peace, cautioning them to be careful in expression [China]; of the importance of launching an educational program [Japan, China] to teach about religions to the young; to nurture a respect for diversity [Tajikistan] by understanding the importance of symbols [Austria, Saudi Arabia]. The delegate from Uzbekistan mentioned his ancient heritage from the Silk route, a cross roads of civilizations which brought Muslims, Buddhists, Jews and Zarathushtis together. The delegate from Slovenia urged youth to be mobile among nations to gain understanding of different cultures; Syria wished to narrow the gap of ignorance that could lead to intellectual rapprochement. It was announced that 2008 would be designated the "European Year of Intercultural Dialogue". The Netherlands proposed establishing a clearing house where successes and failures of inter-religious dialogue occurring at grass roots levels would be collated. Country spokespersons [Gautemala, Qatar, Ukraine, Japan] endorsed the "Alliance of Civilizations", the UN's initiative, cosponsored by

Spain and Turkey, to build bridges between cultures and religions. The Alliance is presently working under the leadership of Mr. Jorge Sampaio, former president of Portugal. Espousing harmony in diversity, the recognition of remaining different yet not confrontational was the order of the day. A consensus among delegates to promote stable and long-term inter-religious & intra-religious dialogue not only at the intercontinental level, but at a very local level took hold.

The session on the afternoon of 4th October, where individuals from civil society interacted with high level representatives of member states of the UN was surprisingly well received. We look forward to creating partnerships at various levels between governments and non-government organizations [NGO's] to work toward common goals of promoting prosperity, eliminating poverty, upholding human rights, caring for creation, and advancing human dignity to enhance security in establishing an agenda for world peace.





# INTERFAITH INTERALIA

## The United Nations Commission on the Status of women



This year the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) will consider the theme:  
**"Financing for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women"**

Zarathushtis interested in participating in the 52nd Session of the Commission on the Status of Women [CSW] meeting, are requested to send their curriculum vitae with a letter of interest to: FEZANA's UN-NGO Committee Co-Chairs, Homi Gandhi [homidgandhi@gmail.com](mailto:homidgandhi@gmail.com), and Behram Pastakia [bpastakia@aol.com](mailto:bpastakia@aol.com),

The cost for travel and visa arrangements will be the responsibility of the participants.

Past participation has been documented in the FEZANA Journal in articles written by youth who have represented the Zarathushti community at the UN.

### Forty-sixth session of the Commission for Social Development

February 6th to 15th 2008

United Nations Headquarters, New York

Theme:

"Full Employment and decent work for all"

Issues include:

ageing, persons with disabilities, youth and the family.

If interested in participating

Contact: [Homidgandhi@gmail.com](mailto:Homidgandhi@gmail.com)

or [bpastakia@aol.com](mailto:bpastakia@aol.com)

Co-Chairs, FEZANA UN-NGO Committee

Arrangements for travel, accommodation, visas and daily subsistence are the responsibility of participants.

### 2007 INTERNATIONAL MUSIC AWARDS BEST FEMALE SOLO ARTIST AUSTRALIA

#### FARITA KHAMBATTA

Farita will sing the official opening song, "*The Light*" for the 4th World Zoroastrian Congress in Ballarat, Australia (December 27, 2007-January 3, 2008) visit [www.farita.com](http://www.farita.com)

**CONGRATULATIONS**

# INTERFAITH INTERALIA

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## Prayer Vigil for the Earth Creating a Culture of Peace

**Zarathushtis** hailing from Iran who are now part of the western Diaspora, participated in the fifteenth annual prayer vigil for the earth held on October 20th and 21st 2007 at the Washington Monument grounds in the capital of the United States.



The following {excerpted} was offered by Shirin Abadian and friends:

*We pray to Ahura Mazda, The almighty God.*

*We pray to Ashozartosht, the first man to worship one god 5000 years ago.*

*Today, Zarathushtis live in many parts of the world.*

*Zarathushtis have a simple rule they live by:*

*Good thoughts, Good words and Good deeds.*

*We are proud of our religion and heritage.*

*We always want Peace in Iran, our homeland and the World.*

*We are very honored to be here and be part of this rich ceremony and pray to the*

*Earth with our fellow brothers and sisters.*

*Zarathushtis believe in respecting EARTH, AIR, WATER, FIRE and in keeping the ENVIRONMENT clean.*

*Yatha Ahu Vairyo... (2)*

*May there be health and long life, complete Glory giving righteousness!*

*May the visible Asha, the invisible Asha, Spandarmazd the seven*

*Ameshaasponds come to this fair offering.*

*We beseech you, Lord, to grant to the present rulers, to all the communities,*

*and to all those of the Good Religion, health and fair repute.*

*For many years keep us worthy to perform worship and utter prayers,*

*to give charity and offerings, being just.*

*May we have health to fulfill all our duties and respect the EARTH.*

*May we be liberal, kind and good!*

*May it be so, may it be more so, may it be according to the wish of Ahura Mazda and*

*the Ameshasponds.*

*Ashem Vohu (1)*

### BACKGROUND

In 1993 a spiritual calling to create an event in Washington, DC emerged in the minds and hearts of several individuals. By 1997, the original group of three collaborators had expanded to over thirty people on the Organizing Committee, hundreds of volunteers had offered their services, and many organizations were providing in-kind donations.

### THE SETTING

Through 2007, the Mall in Washington, DC, in particular the center of the Mall near the Washington Monument, has been considered an appropriate setting because:

- *the location symbolizes a successful people's democracy;*
- *Washington, DC is a powerful city on the Earth at this time;*
- *the Mall provides a model for all the world's people to participate in their own freedom and democracy,*
- *the site calls out for healing a city and a nation whose political functions are in need of renewal and transformation;*

### SACRED FIRE



Every year a fire, which is symbolic of power, cleansing, transformation of matter into energy, and the molten fire in the center of the Earth, burns continuously within a circle for the duration of the thirty three hour event. This sacred circle, this Earth Peace Village, provides the structure where people can celebrate the richness of their diverse heritages and traditions together.

**SACRED CIRCLE:** Recognizing that the Prayer Vigil would be a living, virtual form whose enduring physical presence would rest in its ability to make the soil upon which it is held sacred, the organizers selected the structure valued by

# INTERFAITH INTERALIA

*Religions Working for Peace and Justice*



Indigenous people throughout the Earth and many other cultures—the sacred circle or hoop. The circle, symbolic of the Earth's shape, is ideal because it provides a container for all life and because everyone enters as equals.

The sacred circle, a feminine power symbol, provides balance for the masculine obelisk and energetically invites feminine values such as home, family, relationships, and community to be active and present. It is the organizers' deepest prayer that this annual joining of masculine and

feminine energy within the context of many spiritual metaphors and teachings will (1) produce a healthy seed for generations to come and (2) consecrate the land, the Earth, upon which this event is held as sacred once more.

We believe that now is the time. Now is the time for the collective power of prayer and diverse, ancient spiritual ceremonies to join forces in bringing about positive changes for all life. Many, many people who have participated in the Prayer Vigil report that the opportunity to practice spiritual oneness, to pray with others of all faiths, and to join in each other's ceremonies leads them to new or deeper spiritual insights which make positive contributions to all aspects of their lives.

**The 16th Annual Prayer Vigil for the Earth will be held on October 18 and October 19, 2008 [www.oneprayer.org](http://www.oneprayer.org)**

*Photos by Bill Sanda  
Prayer Vigil for the Earth  
photographer*



## Interfaith Program on "Peace and Violence" and "Religious Architecture" in Chicago at the Dar e Mehr on September 30 2007



Over forty persons from the interfaith community of Chicago (from the Parliament of Religions - CPWR, Faith in Place - FIP), religious communities (Jewish-North Shore Congregational, Archdiocese of Chicago, Union Church of Hinsdale, Jains, Muslims), neighbors along Rte 83, which may rightly be called "Spiritual Alley" for its wealth of religious institutions (Buddhist Temple, Bohra Community Hall, Chinmaya Mission, and the Hindu Temple of Greater Chicago), and academicians (from Elmhurst College) all joined an equal number of community members from the Zoroastrian Association of Chicago, for an Interfaith program on "Peace and Violence" at the Arbab Rustom Guiv Darbe Mehr on September 30th.

The evening opened with a powerful presentation by Dr. Homi Dhalla (delivered in abstentia) on "Dimensions of Peace and Violence" pointing out the faces of violence (warfare, brutality, massacres, bombings ...) around the world, and constructive efforts of statesmen, religious leaders, the interfaith movement, artists and others to promote a culture of peace, and hasten the healing process. Moving responses followed from the Interfaith leaders.

Suzanne Morgan, chair, and Cyrus Rivetna, a board member of the Center for Religious Architecture, then presented a very interesting slide show on "Religious Architecture".

Thanks to Rohinton Rivetna for organizing the event, to ZAC for hosting it, and especially to the ZAC members for the delicious dinner, of pullav, dar, bhinda-per-eedo, wafers, achar, sev and dahi, that was enjoyed by all.

The Thank-You emails said it all: "Sunday was Amazing", "The gathering is something I won't forget", "Thanks for your wonderful hospitality", "It was a wonderful event", "Thanks for a lovely and stimulating evening and your ever so kind and loving hospitality.", "It was an honor to be there", "We were impressed with the scholarly group of participants," "Visiting your temple was the first time for us - thanks for everything" ....

*Photo Courtesy Roshan Rivetna.*

# YOUTHFULLY SPEAKING.....

## Stars Shining Brightly

Nikan H. Khatibi, MBA - Co-Chair, NG07  
Chair, Zoroastrian Youth of North America (ZYNA)



*Photo above: At the podium Tinaz Dhunjisha, sitting: from left Bomi Damkevala, Jim Engineer, Nikan Khatibi, Mantreh Atashband, Mahrukh Motafram, Roshni Kharoliwalla*

What a glorious weekend – those were the words sung by over one hundred distinguished guests and community members who attended the first ever Next Generation Conference (NG07) held in the beautiful city of Chicago. The city was the perfect venue to hold such a pioneering event. With crowds coming in from all across North America, the conference was represented by just the right amount of enthusiastic guest and diversities. Now why you may ask was this conference so spectacular, so pioneering, so different? The bottom line is, it was home to the members of our community who were blind – what?

Yes, I said blind. In the sense that each person who came to the historic Arbab Rustom Guiv Darbe Mehr Center in Chicago brought with them one special thing...an open mind. Each person who entered the Darbe Mehr left behind their prejudice thoughts, of age, gender, cultural beliefs and was ready to roll up their sleeves and put up a fight against all the challenges that our community have and are facing. You've got to admit, that's pretty heroic and for a conference to carry out such a goal is even a bigger deal.

The format of the conference was something I can never forget because it worked so beautifully orchestrated to the advantage of everyone who

was present. The conference organizers from day one knew that they wanted to keep this conference short, sweet, and to the point – and they accomplished that.



The entire weekend event consisted of three very concise session themes:

1) Education, Awareness, & Perpetuation; 2) Achieving Harmony Through Diversity; and 3) Community Building: The Next Generation Blueprint. Each theme represented a session, which then took off on its own. The sessions all began with an amazing array of panelists from multiple generations who were able to represent first hand different ages, genders, positions, opinions, cultural nuances, and geographic diversity throughout North America – wow!

Each panelist spoke for approximately 10 minutes followed by a short 20-minute panel Q&A led by moderators. Small group discussions then ensued, my favorite part of the conference, in which more one-on-one discussion and conversation was the real plus-point. Each small group was charged with creating three action ideas on the session they had just heard. All action ideas were then shared in a large group discussion and the top three consensus ideas of each session were consolidated into the top three conference ideas per session. This collective focus and prioritization helped to set the stage for continued dialogue and action on the part of the conference series that will continue in 2008.

The backbone of the conference was a product of optimistic hard work and effortless dedication of the Chicago Zarathushti Community. Man oh man, what a community – and not



# YOUTHFULLY SPEAKING.....



being from Chicago but having the opportunity to visit many communities throughout the world, I can tell you first hand that this community, and its amazing community members are one I can never forget. The conference was a success in part because of their heroic achievements and heartwarming hospitality.

Ladies and Gentlemen reading this article, the organizers knew that their success could only be achieved if they could inspire, empower, and enlighten each person in attendance through amazing keynote speakers, interactive workshops and interaction with peers that would hopefully lead to the building of lifetime friendships. And they really and truly did it – congratulations to all the organizers of this great conference as well a special thank you to the hosting city of Chicago who took hospitality to a whole new level and both FEZANA and ZYNA for their financial and moral support.



*Photo gallery of NextGenNow, Conference, September 2007, Arbab Rustom Guiv Darbe, Chicago.*

*Photo credits Mantreh Atashband, Nikan Khatibi, and Roshan Rivetna*

## **A NEW INITIATIVE IN COMMUNITY BUILDING \_ ZynaTalk**

Visit [www.ZynaTalk.Blogspot.com](http://www.ZynaTalk.Blogspot.com) and find out what the latest talk is all about.  
And be sure to drop a line - it's easy and you don't have to be a member to do so!!  
Wishes, Nikan



شروع به فعالیت نمودند. رنسانس و انقلاب صنعتی تأثیر مهمی در سیستم آموزشی بوجود آوردند. در شروع رنسانس نید آموزشی بر این قرار گرفت که مردمان باید سواد و آموزش و مهارت مخصوص فرا گیرند زیرا با رشد سریع صنعتی و ایجاد کارخراجات در زمان انقلاب صنعتی برای کارگران داشتن مهارت اولیه در خواندن و نوشتن و ریاضیات و حساب کاملاً ضروری بود. بهتر حال تا انتهای جنگ جهانی اول فقط فرزندان اشخاص مکتول می توانستند از دانشگاه‌های اروپایی استفاده نمایند و سواد آموزی در طبقات پایین مردم نبود زیرا کشاورزی پایه اقتصاد جامعه بود کم کم که جامعه بیشتر صنعتی گردید احتیاج به آموزش رسمی جامعه بطور کلی بیشتر مورد نظر و لازم بنظر می رسید. در امریکا مدارس عمومی و رایگان از سال 1848 شروع گردید آنها بطور داشتند که آموزش می تواند برابری ایجاد نماید و به همین دلیل با شروع سال 1850 برنامه آموزش رایگان در سراسر امریکا شروع گردید و با مالیات مردم مدارس جدید شروع به ساختن شد. به منظوریکه صنعتی شدن به پیش میرفت مدیران و صاحبان مشاغل و تجار تقاضا نمودند که به دانش آموزان بیشتر آموزش داده شود تا بتوانند با پیدا شدن مشاغل از قبیل مدیریت و کارمندی در ادارات مشاغل را پر نمایند. در اواسط قرن

## آموزش و پرورش چه می باشد؟

نوزدهم ایده داشتن مدارس رایگان در سراسر امریکا بوجود آمد و مورد پشتیبانی قرار گرفت زیرا دانش آموزان را برای آینده و گرفتن مشاغل در ادارات و کارگاهها آماده می نمودند. در آن زمان میلیونها مهاجر همه سله به امریکوارده می شدند و این گروه میبایست در مورد فرهنگ و ادب و رسوم امریکایی و همچنین زبان کشور امریکا آموزش میباید. در نتیجه از سال 1920 استادان برنامه های آموزشی و دوره هایی از قبیل علوم اجتماعی و علوم طبیعی و ریاضیات و انگلیسی را ارائه نمودند. سیستم آموزشی امریکا سعی بر آن دارد که احتیاجات جامعه صنعتی و جامعه بعد از صنعتی را با توجه به تنوع فرهنگها در برنامه های آموزشی خود بگنجاند مانند مهارت در کامپیوتر. آگاه بودن از تاریخ و ادب و رسوم سایر کشورها و همچنین تنظیم چکهای و در آمد و خرج زندگی و همچنین آگاهی از جهان و آنچه در آن میگذرد. با توجه به گفته جامعه شناسان بسیاری از کارهایی که در گذشته توسط سایر موسسات انجام میشد در حال حاضر در مسئولیت مدارس قرار دارد. سیستم آموزشی امریکا احتیاجات جامعه را ارزیابی نموده و برنامه های آموزشی خود را بر حد امکان در اطراف احتیاجات جامعه تنظیم می نمایند. برای مثال زمانیکه بتوان بیشتر شاغل شدند دوره کویکستنها بصورت تمام وقت در آمد و حتی برنامه های بعد از ساعت نرسی مدارس افزایش یافت و در حال حاضر مدارس بنا به احتیاجات محلی زمان بیشتری برای هستند. باید به این امر توجه داشت که امروزه آموزگاران و طایف بیشتر و مختلفی را باعهده گرفته اند. بطور مثال آموزگاران امروزه هم مدد کار اجتماعی و هم کلاسار و هم آموزگار هستند همچنین باید قسمتی از وظایف پدران و ملبران را انجام دهند بعضی از آموزگاران باید تا حدی آموزشهای سکسی به دانش آموزان بیاموزند و یا حواسشان به آنها باشد که از موارد مکرر استفاده نمایند. در تمام سطوح آموزشی امریکا از کویکستنان تا دانشگاه بحث ادامه دارد که در مدارس و دانشگاهها چه باید آموزش داده شود ؟ چگونه باید آموزش داده شود ؟ و چه کمائی باید آموزش دهند ؟ آیا سایر کشورها سولائی این چنین از سیستم آموزشی خود دارند؟



## آموزش و پرورش چه میباشد؟

آموزش و پرورش یک سازمان اجتماعی میباشد که مسئولیت دارد که دانش و فرهنگ و مهارت و ارزشهای فرهنگی را بطور اتوماتیک به انسانها منتقل نماید. آموزش ثبات و تغییرات اجتماعی را محکم نگاه میدارد و در شکل گیری و متفکر ساختن اجتماع نقش مهمی را ایفا میکند. امروزه آموزش چنان مهم و مشخص میباشد که در زمینه های جامعه شناسی در مورد آن به مطالعه پرداخته اند. حال چگونه آموزش تا این حد در کشورهای صنعتی امروزه بصورت مهمی ظاهر میشود.

## آموزش از نقطه نظرتاریخی

آموزش در تمام جوامع منظور و هدف خاصی را دارد. در حد پایین جامعه مردم برای زندگی و نجات در اجتماع بایستی حداقل دانش و مهارت را داشته باشند. در حد بالاتر تشکیلات اجتماعی آموزش و پرورش یکی از عوامل اصلی است که نسبت به نگاهداری فرهنگ و جاودانه نمودن آن در اجتماع و انتقال نسل به نسل اقدام مینماید.

## آموزش غیر رسمی در جامعه کم سواد

قبل از آنکه خواندن و نوشتن پیدا شود جوامع بیسواد وجود داشته اند این جوامع زبان نوشتن نداشتند و میتوان گفت فقط یک تکنولوژی ساده داشته اند که در محور فعالیت روزانه برای تقلا و نجات خودشان در مقابل نیروهای طبیعی دور میزده است و قدیمی ترین نوع آموزش در اطراف نجات از خطرات زندگی بوده است. در این جوامع مردم دانش و مهارت را از طریق آموزش غیر رسمی از طریق والدین و سایر افراد جامعه بدست میاورند که چگونه با سایر افراد رفتار نمایند و یا چگونه غذا تهیه نموده و یا چگونه سر پناهی و آلات و ابزار و اسلحه تهیه نمایند. بطور مثال یک پسر مهارت شکار کردن و گله چرانی و ماهیگیری و مزرعه داری را از پدر

## آموزش و پرورش چه میباشد؟

خود می آموخت در حالیکه یک دختر از مادرش فرا میگرفت که چگونه غذا آماده نماید و یا چگونه از برادر و خواهر کوچکتر خود مراقبت و نگاهداری نماید. این آموزش های غیر رسمی اغلب از طریق گفتن قصه ها و پیام های فرهنگی و یا شرکت در مراسم مذهبی دریافت میکردند و بمرور زمان این آموزش غیر رسمی به نسلهای آینده منتقل می شده و بصورت یک کد روانی جامعه میگردد.

## آموزش رسمی در جوامع پیش و بعد از صنعتی

آموزش رسمی آموزشی است که توسط یک سازمان آموزشی با یک برنامه ریزی صحیح و افراد متخصص در آن رشته میباشد تا آنها بتوانند آن دانش و مهارت بخصوص را به انسانهای دیگر منتقل نمایند که خود شامل روش فکر کردن و تفکر میباشد. باور بر این است که اولین آموزش رسمی در یونان قدیم و یا روم بوجود آمده است. مکانی که فلاسفه معروفی مانند سقراط و اریستول و پلوتو بمردان بی سواد مهارت فکر کردن را آموختند که بتوانند در هنر بحث و گفتگو تبادل نظر نمایند. در اواسط سالیان میانی اولین دانشگاهها و دانشکده ها تحت نظارت کلیساهای کاتولیک

# ZARATHUSTRA

## Humata - Hukhta - Huvarshta



Sina Vadjani



Large size book (11.2"x12.6") with 270 pages and 360 glossy impressive photos and texts in English & German, inclusive DVD & SACD Hybrid. Also available as only SACD Hybrid or DVD.



Sina Vadjani hands you the whole wealth of his musical know-how in this unusual production. Iranian instruments, such as nay, oud, daf and camancha, voices of Persian priests, original sounds from Iran, Indian sitar and the bansuri flute played by Rana Majumder – unite with western harmonies to announce the message of the religious founder – Zarathustra.

### GOOD THOUGHTS - GOOD WORDS - GOOD DEEDS.

The composer is so impressed by the peaceful message, that he travels for weeks through his native Iran in the footsteps of Zarathustra, where he meets wonderful artists and Zoroaster holy men, collecting music, atmosphere and feeling. The result is a new work, whose mood is one, which floats between ease and confidence to emotional longing and fascinating drama.

This book contains two more surprises: The first is a DVD. The

second is Vadjani's new CD ZARATHUSTRA boasting a world premiere. He is the first composer to include the voices of Zoroastrian priests in his works – and their prayer chants, coupled with Persian sounds and modern Western grooves, proclaim the peaceful message of Zoroastrianism. Last but not least, the DVD provides a kaleidoscope of visual impressions from the land of Zoroaster – set to the rhythm of Vadjani's compositions.

Sina Vadjani, son of a French mother and Iranian father, considers it his duty as an artist to deliver spiritual messages and to make a creative contribution to the dialogue between the different cultures. He was born in Esfahan in 1954 but growing up in Tehran, San Francisco and Paris he was soon confronted with the necessity for interethnic tolerance.

Following first performances of pop songs and French chansons he soon turned his attention to aspects of Middle Eastern music – inspired by his travelling experiences and fascinated by the meditative power of the music. Vadjani's goal is to communicate the essence of this analysis through his music, as a means of crossing and bringing together borders, uniting traditional sounds with electronic grooves in the creative process.

# Personal Profiles

## ERVAD JAL SAVAKSHAH PESTONJI KUKA (1908-)

**Ervad Jal Savakshah Pestonji Kuka celebrated his 99th birthday October 7, 2007. He was ordained as navar and maratab in the first batch of students from the Dadar Athornan Boarding Madressa.**

Longevity is in the genes of the Parsis. Few Parsis live to be a 100. Fewer still retain good health and are active at an advanced age. One such rare individual is Ervad Jal Savakshah Pestonji Kuka who celebrated his 99th birthday on 9th October 2007. He was born on 9th October 1908 at Tehmulji's Parsi Lying-in Hospital, Mumbai. He had his school education at Sir J.J. School from Std. IV to Matriculation. For seven years he studied at Dadar Athornan Boarding Madressa where he was enrolled in the first batch of students. He was ordained as a navar and maratab at Modi Atashbehran, Surat.

His parents together with his five brothers and five sisters, were staying at Dastur Baug at Naigaum Cross Road at Dadar since 1909. His father served as a priest at Narielvala Agiary and was also active with the Athornan Mandal. Since 1926 Ervad Kuka has been residing at Dadar Parsi Colony.

He served as a Parsi priest at the prayer hall at Shanghai from 1931 to 1946 for 15 years. From 1946 to 1962 he served as a storekeeper at Taj Mahal Hotel at Apollo Bunder. In 1963 he was again invited to Hong Kong to serve as a priest where he served for 17 years and retired in 1980.

His family members thought that he would not marry. He first met his future wife when he was holidaying in Kashmir and married her some 13 years later. At age of 57 he married Miss Piroja (Piloo) Hormusji Mistry in 1965.

He was so popular with all at Hong Kong that even after retirement he and his wife were invited to Hong

Kong for the inauguration of the new Zoroastrian building. On 9th October 2007 the Parsi Zoroastrians at Hong Kong celebrated his 99th birthday by arranging a dinner function.

In 1991 he was elected to the Anjuman Committee with the highest number of votes from Dadar. His hobbies are reading and traveling. He and his wife have traveled extensively in Asia, Europe, Canada, Africa, U.S.A., Australia. The couple have also been passengers on the QEII luxury liner.

He is a man of few words and a good listener. Thrifty by nature, he believes in simple living and high thinking. He is a philanthropist who regularly contributes for noble causes. His illustrious non agerian cousin Ervad Irach S. Kuka, author of several books, is the managing trustee of Dadar Athornan Madressa.

When asked about the secret of his long and useful life, he modestly replied: simplicity, regular habits, walking. His wife added: "He never overeats."

Both husband and wife are lovers of outdoors and travelling. They visit the Rustomfaramna Agiary and Five Gardens daily. For several years every summer they would regularly go for a few months to Bahadurji Sanatorium at Deolali.

May Ahura Mazda bless Ervad Jal Kuka with good health and may his example encourage our community members to lead a simple, useful, healthy industrious life and for the some modern day Parsi priests to follow his example of wearing his Parsi topi round the clock. May Ervad J Kuka celebrate his one hundred birthday in 2008 .

**Marzban Giara**



**Shazneen Rabadi Gandhi will return with Sunday Stories from the Shahnameh in Spring 2008 (see Milestones for Birth Announcements)**

## BIRTHS

**Benjamin Dinyar Irani**, a boy, to Dinyar and Iryna Irani, grandson to Minocher and Golcher Irani, in Richmond Hill, ONT on April 20.

**Kaden Keki Mistry**, a boy, to Sherry and Ross Mistry, brother to Keyana Shireen in Brentwood, CA on May 7.

**Diya Pestonjee**, a girl to Gayatri and Daanish Pestonjee in Ambler, PA on May 14

**Ashdin Ryan Kade**, a boy, to Damon and Aseena (Shroff) Kade in Houston, TX on June 23.

**Athena Rony Gadiwalla**, a girl, to Rony and Natasha Gadiwalla in Burlington, ONT on July 11.

**Daarian Karanjawala**, a boy to Eric and Armin Karanjawala in New Jersey on July 14.

**Jordan Kiana Loy**, a girl, to Nilufer and Michael Loy, granddaughter to Behram and Tehmi Dalal (Cocoa Beach, FL) in Potomac, MA on July 26.

**Zayden Antia**, a boy, to Mazda and Shahnaz Antia, brother to Kiyen, grandson to Dastur Dr. Kersey and Dilshad Antia (Chicago, IL) and Dr. Rustom and Roshan Mehdiabadi, great grandson to Gool Dinyari on August 6.

**Rohan Viraf Zack**, a boy, to Shahnaz and Viraf Zack, brother to Shavir, grandson to Pervez and Jerbanu Zack in Foster City, CA on August 9.

**Rayan Irani**, a boy to Nazneen and Farzad Irani, a grandson to Jeroo and Khodi Irani in Harrisburg, PA on August 10.

**Shrey Damania**, a boy to Priya and Farzad Damania in New York City on August 17.

**Rayomand Patel**, a boy to Pashang and Khushnuman Patel, grandson to Framroze and Armaity Patel in New Jersey, on September 9.

**Tahm Rezwan Pavri**, a boy, to Azameen and Rezwan Pavri, brother to Farah, grandson to Dinar and Dinyar Pavri (Pleasant Hill, CA) and Nergesh and Sam Jamasji (Karachi, Pakistan) in Palo Alto on September 10.

**Shayaan Gandhi**, a girl, to Shazneen and Hanoz Gandhi in Santa Monica on October 25. (Shazneen is the editor of the Sunday Stories for the FEZANA Journal)

Photo below



**Mehraban Mehini**, (below proud father with baby) a boy to Afsaneh & Rashid Mehini in Scripps Memorial Hospital of La Jolla California on October 26 at 6.35 pm (Rashid is the immediate past treasurer of FEZANA)



NAVJOTES, SEDREH-PUSHI

**Behram Jamadar**, (photo left), son of Khurshid and Farhad Jamadar, brother of Sean Jamadar, grandson of late Jivanji and Pervez Jamadar and Philco and Barjor Mody at the ZAC Center, Westminster, CA on July 21.



**Afreen Behram Sharifabadi**, daughter of Nina and Behram Sharifabadi, sister of Zen in Mississauga, ONT on August 4.

**Kyle Jehangir Balsara**, daughter of Dinaz and Jehangir Balsara in Toronto, ONT on September 15.

**Shahzad Minoo Bhada**, son of Minoo and Putli Bhada (Toronto, ONT) in Pune, India on September 16.

## WEDDINGS

**Firuz Sathia**, daughter of Mehroo Rohinton Chothia to **Dr. Robert Ayoub**, son of Gwen and Raymond Ayoub in Toronto, ONT on April 25.

**Natasha Jum Mehdiabadi to Cyrus Dara Jilla** in Houston, TX on June 23.

**Riyaz Deshmukh**, son of Rustom and Maharookh Deshmukh, to **Jennifer Brooke Shragge**, daughter of Clive and Heather Shragge, in Vancouver, BC on June 30.

**Firdaus Behli Bhathena**, son of Zarin and Behli Bhathena (Halifax, Nova Scotia) to **Jennifer Cochrane**, daughter of Judy and Robert Cochrane (Greenwood, Nova Scotia) in Halifax, Nova Scotia on August 5. Jennifer and Firdaus met at the University of Maine while pursuing their Education degrees. Jennifer now teaches high school English and Drama and Firdaus went on to get his Masters in IT Education from the University of Wollongong and currently teaches Physics. The newlyweds reside in Hong Kong. (photo below, the couple with Ervad Jal and Ervad Dr Zubin Panthaki )



**Padra Farhangi**, son of Goli and the late Mehraban Farhangi, to **Sarah**

**Rebecca Waite**, in Vancouver, BC on July 7.

**Vera Dinshaw to Ronald Steven** Springett in Chicago, IL on August 30.

**Tinaz Dhunjisha**, daughter of Freya and Farokh Dhunjisha (Wheaton, IL) to **Deepak Sevak** in Chicago, IL on September 2.

**Afreen Kayani to Sudhir Pargaonkar** in Houston, TX on September 2.

**Tanaz Behrana**, daughter of Silloo and late Pesi Behrana to **Zareer Divecha**, son of Mani and Jal Divecha in Mississauga, ONT on September 28.

**Cyrus Chinoy**, son of Dr. Minoo and Jerro Chinoy (Flint, MI) to **Rashna Batliwala**, daughter of Kety and Dinshaw Batliwalla on October 13.

**Dina Dadabhoy**, daughter of Porus and Dr Zerine Dadabhoy to **Amir Darki**, son of Dr. Abdul and Shamsi Darki on October 20.

**Gayve Kazak**, son of Mehroo and Hoshi Kazak, to **Erzsebet Vegi**, daughter of Erzsebet and late Jenő Vegi in Kitchener, ONT on October 27.

**Burgess Kerawala**, son of Ruby and Godrej Kerawala (Union City, CA) to **Geetanjali Arora**, daughter of Usha Arora in Fremont, CA on November 4.

#### ANNIVERSARIES

**Jasmin and Hormuz Vania** of Springfield, IL celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary in September.

#### DEATHS

Homi Kawasji Patell, brother of Soonie Bahadur Patell (Toronto, ONT), brother-in-law of Khorshed Minoo Patell, uncle of Syavux and Frey, Mahrukh and Lilly, Nargis and Darius Patell, great uncle of Freddy and Cyrus Patell and Crystal and Jonathan Creamer in Multan, Pakistan on August 4.

Rustom Rashid Sasani, 65, husband of Nargish Sasani, father of Shirin Chaturvedi (Mississauga, ONT), Behruz Sasani and Bakhtavar (Mumbai) in Mumbai, India on August 11.

Khorshed Bhavnagri, 81, wife of late Rumi Bhavnagri, mother of late

Vispi and Rattoo Bhavnagri, in North Vancouver, BC on August 13.

Phiroz Randelia, 73, brother of Arnavaz Randelia (San Francisco, CA) and Armaity Noshir Watchha in Gilroy, CA on September 3.

Dara Dastur, 83, husband of Riina; one of the founding members of the Zoroastrian Fraternity of Toronto in 1966, a predecessor organization to the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario in Toronto, ONT on September 13.

Behmoun Khosravi in Toronto, ONT on September 14.

Goolshun Dastur, 94, mother of Khushrav Dastur and Roshan Muncherji in Vancouver, BC on September 14.

Ardeshtir Bolandi, cousin of Mitra Jam (Thornhill, ONT) in Los Angeles, CA on September 17.

Khorshed Mody, mother of Vera Kersi Mistry and Thrity Uwe Pfeutzner in Mississauga, ONT on September 17.

Shirin Aibara, 95, mother of Fili Patel, grandmother of Pervin Sagar (Houston, TX) and great granddaughters Zia and Ayesha Sagar in Mumbai, India on September 19.

Kodabakhsh Ahourai, father of Sima Pervaz Oshidari, Alborz Ahourai and Morvarid Dinyari, grandfather of Parham and Pedram Oshidari, and Donya and Omid Ahourai in California on September 21.

Purveen Maneckshaw, sister of Sarosh Maneckshaw (Houston, TX) in Mumbai, India on October 3.

Parydokht Khodaraam Haveshti, mother of Sima Sohrabian and Homa Hemati, in California on October 7.

Parviz Mehta, wife of late Framroze Mehta, mother of Niloufer Kavarana (Toronto) and Jimmy Mehta (Mumbai) on October 12.

Shahram Mavandadi, husband of Mahsu, father of Shawhin and Ashkan, son of Soltan and brother of Shahrad and Shahbaram, of Toronto, ON on October 12.

Khorshed Sethna, sister of Bahman and Frey Sethna in Toronto, ONT. on October 19.

Firouzeh Rostam Seli Sharifabad, wife of Borzu Rostamian, mother of Sohrab, Faroborz, Keikhosrow, Kamyar in California.

Dhun Maneck Soparivala, wife of late Colonel Maneck S. Soparivala, mother of Major General Kaizad Soparivala (Karachi, Pakistan) and Mahrukh Soparivala in Toronto, ONT.

Paridokht Mobed Faridoun Zardoshti, mother of Arshya and Arya, daughter of late Faridoun and Mehrbanoo, sister of Homayoun Ghostasbpour (Toronto) and Farangis in California on October 19.

Fali Hormusji Printer, 85, husband of Banoo, father of Meher (Mehernosh) Iranpur (Montreal) and late Neville, brother of Percy (Montreal) and Keki (Toronto) in Mumbai, on November 1.

#### OBITUARY

**Khorshed F. Mehta**, 86, who passed away Aug. 25, in Churchgate, Bombay, India. Beloved wife of Ferdoon 'Fadli' Mehta. Loving mother to Firoza (Adel) Engineer of Naperville, IL, and Meher Mehta (Bombay). Cherished Nanna, to grandsons Jamshed 'Jim' Engineer (Kiku) of Aurora, IL, and Sohrab Engineer (Munich, Germany), and loving sister to Piroja 'Babul' Nargolwalla (Peshotan) of Bombay.

Our beloved nanna was an outstanding human being who will always be known for her laughter, her candor, her intellect, and most importantly, her love and endless care for those less fortunate. She will be loved, cherished and remembered fondly always.

*Please send all submissions for "Milestones" to Mahrukh Motafrah, 2390 Chanticleer Drive, Brookfield, WI 53045, mmotafrah@msn.com, Tel: 262-821-5296. NOTE: If no year is specified, it implies "within the past 12 months."*

## Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor:

I have seen the Interesting Fall 2007 issue of our Journal, and observed that some of the prominent individuals of historical interest have been overlooked in "Parsi Presence in the Gulf."

In recent history perhaps the earliest connection of our community goes back to late 1920s or early 1930s when S. Dorabjee & Son established a trading house in Southern Iran, at Bandar Abbas, at the entrance to the Gulf. Joining that business, was a young man Jamshed Marolia from Navsari who made an immediate impression on his employers, drawing the keen attention of Mr. Dorabjee. In 1932 oil was found in Bahrain, and Jamshed was requested to travel there, to explore the possibility of starting a business in the Sheikhdom.

Jamshed did not return to either Iran or to India, and decided on an immediate plunge. Thus came about S. Dorabjee & Son in Bahrain.

The Bahrain business grew rapidly, surpassing the one in Iran, which was now run by Phiroze, the only son of Mr. Dorabjee. Phiroze not having great interest in business closed the Iran operation and settled down in England.

Seeing the business flourish through the difficult Second World War years, Jamshed got his brother Jal to Bahrain to assist him. The Parsi business was held in great esteem by the Bahrain society, and Jamshed and his wife Mani soon were prominent social personalities.

In 1951, following the unfortunate miscarriage experienced by Viloo, Jal Marolia's wife, with the consequential difficulties, Jamshed approached the then ruler Sh. Sulman bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, who graciously allotted a generous plot of land, for the development of the very first, and the only aramgah in the region.

Bahrain Zoroastrian Association (BZA) was thus established in 1956 to enable the registration of that land. Sadly even before the land could be officially registered, Ketty Sohrabji expired, and the first internment took place. Initially just a barbed wire fence marked the grave in the desert.

There have been several burials of grown ups, and infants since, including that of Jamshed Marolia who expired in July 1971. Phiroze Dorabjee having settled in England and having no interest in the Gulf, sold the business some years later to a Bahraini businessman.

*Esadvaster S. Bamji Washington.*

**CORRECTION** On page 47 FJ FALL 07, Noshir Adenwalla should read Noshir Motiwala.

### Looking for a Soul Mate?

Try these matrimonial sites and services, <http://matrimonial.zoroastrianism.com> - [www.TheParsiMatch.com](http://www.TheParsiMatch.com)  
[www.shaadi.com](http://www.shaadi.com), Mrs Gool Banaji, Parel, Mumbai [goolpesi@gmail.com](mailto:goolpesi@gmail.com), Mrs Serah Kotval, Dadar, Mumbai - Tel 91 22 2142 3570

### Matrimonials

FEZANA Journal will coordinate initial contacts between interested parties. We do not assume any responsibility for verifying credentials.

Contact Roshan Rivetna [rrivetna@aol.com](mailto:rrivetna@aol.com).

Male, 27, fun-loving, tall (5' 11"), good-looking, MS (Engineering) from University of Texas, presently working in Dallas, is eager to meet the right young Parsi lady. Contact: [awaterangel@yahoo.com](mailto:awaterangel@yahoo.com).

[M07-13]



## Ontario Zoroastrian Community Foundation



In the coming months, we will begin the first phase of our building project. With 10 Acres of pristine land purchased by the Zoroastrian community in Ontario, we have started our faithful journey.

The Zoroastrian Religious and Cultural Centre is for all Zoroastrians in North America, and worldwide. The ZRCC will ensure the preservation of our rich culture and heritage for generations.



Join our journey at [www.OZCF.com](http://www.OZCF.com)

# Zarathustra

**Author:** Sina Vodjani

**Published by** Membran International

**Price:** Complete 30 Euro, DVD Only 10 Euro, SACD 9 Euro

**ISBN:** 978-3-89562-739-1

**Reviewed by** Hoshang B. Shroff, Vancouver, B.C.

BOOKS  
ARTS &

*The publication is in three parts: the book is in English and German; a DVD and a CD. I will deal with each separately.*

## THE BOOK

The book has 273 pages of which approximately pages 26 to 91 and 108 to 269 consist exclusively of photographs. In this paragraph I am referring only to the sparse writing in which there are two main propositions as follows:

*"Persia was in the grip of **injustice** and **false testimony**, **enslavement** and **exploitation** when Zoroaster Spitama was born. The year of his birth has been estimated at some time between 630 and 1000 BC – some researchers even go as far back as 4000 BC with their estimates; (emphasis added)*

Despite the fairly wide range of estimate for the birth of Zarathushtra the author still states that Persia was in the grip of injustice, false testimony, enslavement and exploitation all disparate notions thrown into one sentence. No details are given about this assertion or reference made to any authoritative source.

### Does the author mean that:

- i. For several centuries unhealthy conditions prevailed in Iran and that
- ii. There was an organized institution, not unlike our courts of law, in which adjudication resulted after false testimony was given and accepted resulting in miscarriage of justice. If such an institution existed in ancient Iran, which I frankly doubt with my background of law of many years, it certainly would be of great interest to international jurists and historians. If Vodjani is referring to an old Iranian king, it would be helpful for him to have given some details.

### Another quote:

**"Zoroastrianism has always had a major influence on music;** the world famous Indian conductor Zubin Mehta belongs to the Parsi Zoroastrians. British singer Freddie Mercury ..... (1991), once front man of the super group Queen, was also a Parsi – he created a musical monument to Zoroaster with the famous rock number The Prophet's Song. (emphasis added)

Once again the author makes a huge statement: "Zoroastrianism has always had a major influence on music." There is no connection between the first sentence and the rest of the paragraph quoted above. How is a reader to conclude from reference to two contemporary musicians that Zoroastrianism has always had a major influence on music? Am I to understand that conductor Mehta somehow introduces Zarathushti doctrines in classical western compositions of several eminent composers? Zubin Mehta is a noted conductor of western classical music, not a composer of it.

## THE DVD

The DVD consists of some excellent photographs of Iran as captured by the camera of Vodjani. The photographs speak for themselves. Unfortunately some comments on the photographs are difficult to follow. For example at page 230 in describing a photograph of a baker, Vodjani makes a bald assertion that the bakers "have a special importance in Zoroastrianism". Is he relying on an oral Iranian tradition in making this assertion? I do not believe the Zarathushtis from the subcontinent would make a similar statement. It is incumbent on Vodjani to have given some explanation

for the assertion as to why our religion treats bakers more favorably than say farmers or teachers?

BOOKS

ARTS



## THE CD

The music composed for this publication is described by the author as “a major musical work”. I have listened to the CD eager to note the specific influence of the religion of Zarathushtra on music composed by Vojdani. The fourth track of the CD is described as “Dear Friend”. It consists of two songs in Punjabi and Hindi! The recital is so soft that apart from recognizing the languages I could not hear the words clearly. I failed to notice any connection between the music and the tenets of our religion in most of the tracks.

Vojdani primarily composes light Western music producing a pleasant sound. Having a priest recite our famous players Ashem Vohu however cannot by itself make Vojdani’s composition original Zarathushti music!

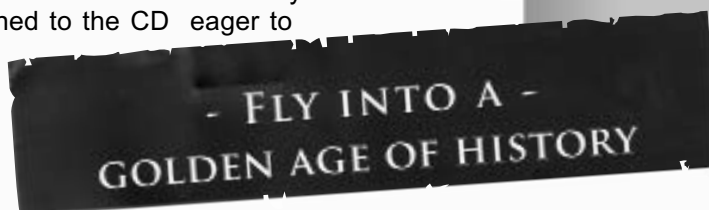
## THE EXPRESS AIMS OF THIS MULTIMEDIA PUBLICATION

“In the western world, most preconceptions about the ancient Persian prophet Zarathushtra are based on Nietzsche’s book “Thus Spoke Zarathustra” and Richard Strauss’ symphonic poem of the same name... However, apart from some less important details, these works do not refer to the historical prophet Zarathushtra – or Zoroaster, as he is commonly known in English. This is also the case in Mozart’s “Magic Flute”...”.

Vojdani has singled out Nietzsche and totally overlooked the profound Western scholars of our religion to name a few: Martin Haug, Max Muller, and Eckhart Kullke. There are of course several learned writers on Zarathushtra throughout the world not appropriate for me to name them in this review. Since the book is aimed at European readers, such a reader would most certainly discover these well-known European Scholars rather than Nietzsche as the authority on Zarathushtra. I noted on the Internet an organization called “European Centre for Zoroastrian Studies” conducting serious work.

My conclusion about the book is that it is ill conceived; the author does not have detailed knowledge of our religion. Vojdani has candidly stated in the book that “until quite recently”, “the prophet Zoroaster did not play any role at all” in his life.

The aims of this publication are much too high. If the publication was aimed simply to delight us with pictures of Iran and some light music composed to go with it I would have taken no exception to it. Having, however, set such lofty aims, it was incumbent of the author to have carried out appropriate research before rushing into publication. I sincerely trust that in a revised edition Vojdani will weed out these shortcomings and compose original music which will make the Zarathushti music lovers proud of the assertion that “Zoroastrianism has always had a major influence on music”.



SINA VOJANI  
ZARATHUSTRA



GOOD THOUGHTS -  
GOOD WORDS - GOOD DEEDS



# MY BOMBAY KITCHEN

Traditional and Modern Parsi Home Cooking

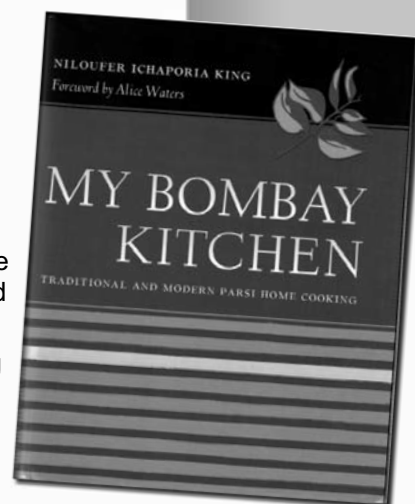
**Author:** Niloufer Ichaporia King

**Pages:** 338, **Price** \$27.50

**Published by** University of California Press

**Reviewed by** Dolly Dastoor

BOOKS  
&  
ARTS



A book on Parsi food written by a Parsi and published in the USA, it includes 165 recipes, making delicious Parsi food accessible to the western palate.

An anthropologist by training, Niloufer Ichaporia King informs all gourmet buffs of the history, ritual beliefs of the Parsi community as seen in the food cooked and eaten by the Parsi families. She reminisces about her happy childhood in her grandmother's and mother's kitchen, shares family anecdotes and photographs, combining wit with scholarship. The book easily

transports readers to the household of the Ichaporia family in Mumbai and submerges them in the scents and tastes of Parsi food. She manages this with charm (enhanced by old-time family photographs) but without sentimentality. She nostalgically recalls the days when "bread, eggs and milk were brought to your door, every morning, even if you bought 3 eggs (the eggs would be exchanged if they were spoilt) or 1 roll or even nothing".

Her approach to cooking is traditional in the manner of Parsi cooking over the centuries: absorbing new ideas and influences without losing its essential Indo-Persian character. Her recipes reflect the influence of the Gujaratis of the west coast of India where the Parsis first found shelter after leaving Persia, to the Muslim influence (Patra ni Machi) and finally to the influence of the British Raj. (the Irish stew), suggesting that the Parsi food is an amalgam of different absorbing cultures.

Niloufer King, a cook and an anthropologist, writes with charm, sometimes asking the reader to just follow the recipe and not ask any questions, which reminds one of their mothers who often said "just do it". Her market-inspired dishes are written in a seductive style. A light-hearted, easy to read, book from beginning to end it exudes enough confidence in the reader to want to rush into the kitchen to try the recipe.

My Bombay Kitchen is much more than a cook book, it a nostalgic trip down memory lane, full of tastes, smells and colours, of masala being ground on the stone, and meat cubes being squeezed through the hand grinder. There are menus for all occasions including Dhansak for Sundays, and a Christmas dinner, all adapted to the North American style of life of taking short cuts and substitutions. Permission is given to use tinned coconut milk, instead of milk from a fresh coconut !!!

A detailed glossary of ingredients used in the recipes is listed according to their common names in English, followed by their names in Parsi Gujarati. To help the reader shop for them in the Indian Stores in North America their Hindi names are also given eg. Drumsticks (sekta ni singh), basil seed (tukhmuriya ni biya). The glossary explains the origin of the spices and how it is to be used, she also gives us the names of the stores, their telephone #s and their websites from where the ingredients can be ordered or purchased. She has six pages of further reading on "Persia, Parsis, and Mumbai", food, food plants and food history" and "cookbooks".

What I found most interesting was that each section head, had a Gujarati title and an English title e.g. "Tarkari" above the word "Vegetable", "eeda" over "eggs". Illustrated with line drawings of traditional utensils, a selection of kitchen equipment and basic ingredients needed to start you off. At the start of the book, there is a design of a traditional fish (for good luck) in "chalk"

For those who want to revel in the yesteryears, there is one more reason to grab this extraordinary book and start cooking so the art of Parsi cooking stays alive and the culinary traditions passed on through generations of mothers and grandmothers continue.

**Dolly Dastoor, connoisseur of good food**

# PERSIAN CUISINE

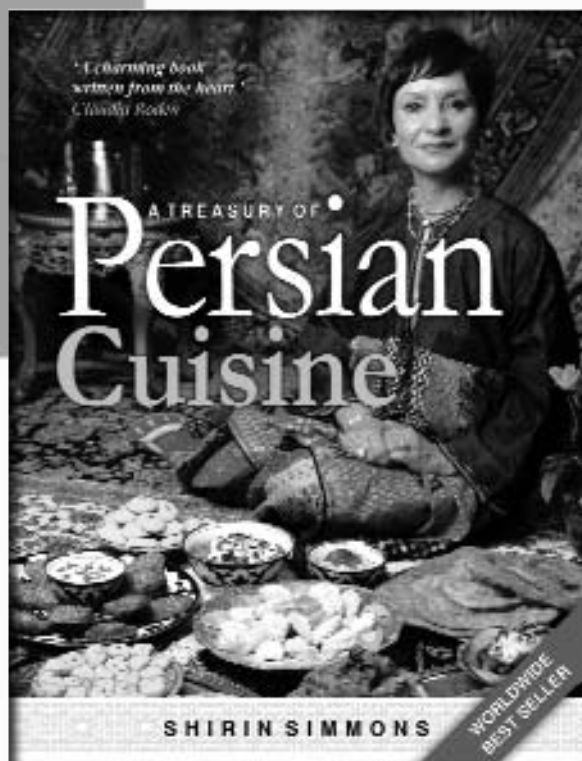
Author: Shirin Simmons

Pages: 270 Price \$40

Publisher Stamford House Publishing

Reviewed by Mitra Bahrami

BOOKS  
&  
ARTS



Shirin Simmons has written a magnificent book that provides healthy eating recipes with advice on ingredients and cooking techniques. She recounts the Iranian history, culture, tradition and her life story through her recipe book. Being born and raised in Yazd till her youth, she learned cooking and entertaining skills from her mother who was a talented cook. Her understanding of the culture is tempered by a true fascination, affection and years of experience with her family and people of Yazd.

The book begins with a description of Iranian geography and history. This helps the reader to reflect and associate the recipes to

the customs and festivities and help us better understand the origins of certain recipes.

The next section of the book is about the origin and properties of ingredients and spices used regularly in Persian cuisine. Shirin Simmons is a nurse who is health conscious and worked with Dr. Kaboli who was an experimental medicine physician and a homeopath. She believes in the power of healing food. She describes to us the beneficial effect of certain ingredients and foods used in ancient remedies. Some of these ingredients are being researched in universities around the world for their healing powers. For example, research has proved that cinnamon is beneficial for people suffering from diabetes and pomegranate is known as a fruit with the highest amount of antioxidant.

The chapters are full of recipes for healthy eating, fresh ingredients, low fat vegetarian dishes, fruits and nuts. Some recipes that are laborious and long to prepare become possible due to her simple and easy explanations. Also, some old recipes forgotten through the time are revived in this book. The

recipes are mostly composed of the four food groups which should be present in a healthy diet. Also, another important key to healthy nutrition is consuming a variety of foods, which are present in the different recipes. They are fresh, dried or frozen depending on the season. The recipes are explained and created in a way that the food conserves a maximum of vitamins and minerals. They are colourful, savoury and appealing. Beautiful pictures demonstrate the presentation of some of the recipes. The origin of some of the recipes are also explained. In fact, this book permits us to have clearly vivid memories of Iranian tradition and cuisine after many decades. Shirin Simmons is a friendly kitchen companion, freely sharing not only her recipes, but also her tips. Her recipes have the special flavor of hospitality. She insists on the importance of socialising, community and sense of belonging.

**Mitra Bahrami,** born in Tehran, Iran, obtained Bsc in Biology from University of Pierre et Marie Curie in Paris, France. She moved to Canada in



1990. Studied food Technology at Institut Technologie Agroalimentaire de Saint Hyacinthe in Québec. She has worked for several years in food industries as a food technologist. At present she is enrolled at the University of Montreal and will graduate as a dietician/nutritionist in December 2008.

## The Religion of Asho Zarathushtra: Its Prophet, Its Philosophy, Its Practice

BOOKS  
&  
ARTS

**Author Jimmy N. Sidhva**

**Pages: 156, NO price mentioned.**

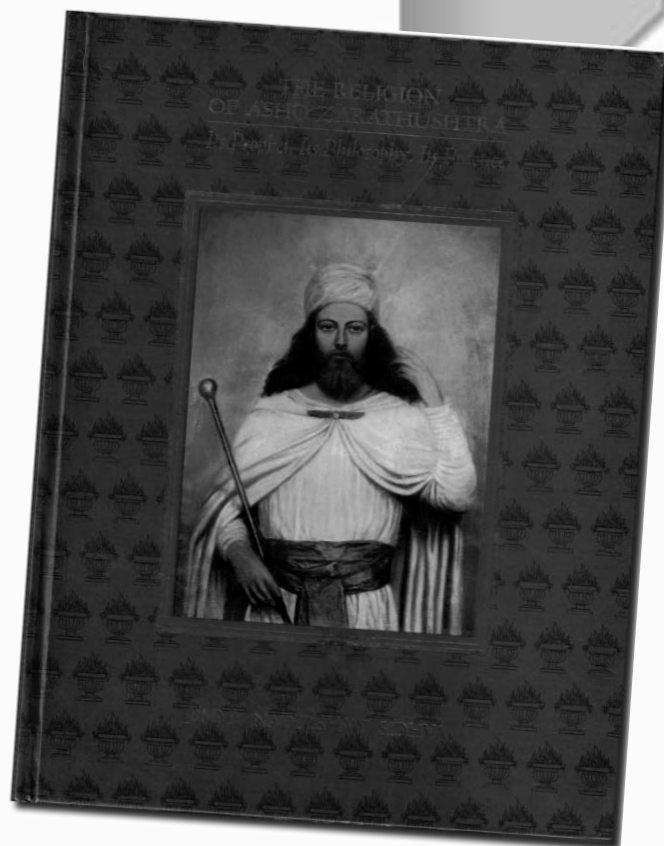
**It was published by Dr. J. N. Sidhva, 140 Backbay Reclamation, Mumbai 400 021, India.**

**Reviewed by Jamsheed K. Choksy, Professor Indiana University**

**(Mumbai, 2006).**

The book under review is a composition from the heart, a work of constant faith and elegant prose. Over 156 pages, Dr. Sidhva seeks to concisely survey important aspects of Zarathushti faith, its founder to its contemporary presence. At strategic points, lavish color photographs serve to reinforce readers' appreciation for the religion and practitioners.

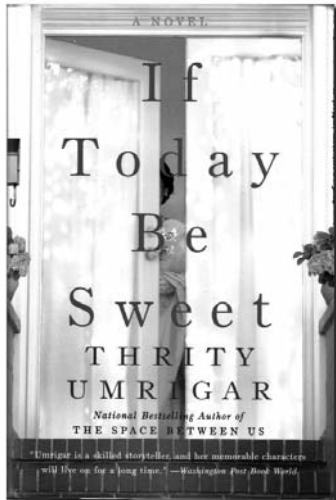
Dr. Sidhva's contribution begins with a synopsis of the life and time of prophet Zarathushtra drawing upon the Avestan scriptures and Pahlavi commentaries. Covering information well-known to Zarathushtis, the chapter provides a traditional account of the founder of Zarathushti religion. Next, the emblems of faith worn by Zarathushtis namely the sudre and kusti, are discussed from their legendary origins to their present-day usage. The roles, functions, ritual levels or grades, and purity of fire as a symbol through which prayer is directed to Ahura Mazda is addressed in the chapter that follows. The basic tenets of Zarathushtrian religion are mentioned next including the Amesha Spentas, the Yazatas, the spiritual and material tussles between Asha and Drug or order against confusion, the roles of each person while alive, and the possible outcomes in the afterlife. Several important rituals and rites of passage are presented in a subsequent chapter: the Padyab, Nahn, and Barashnum cleansings; the Navjote (which would have been better placed in the socio-religious ceremonies category before marriage), Nawar, and Martab initiations; marriage and death rites or life's transitional events; and very brief allusions to liturgical services. The main prayers are translated as well. Finally, a few comments by well-known non-Zoroastrians about the religion and its followers are gathered as tributes. In conclusion, Dr. Sidhva offers an interpretation of faith and its purpose.



This book would have benefited from occasional touches of contemporary scholarly research. For instance, a majority of scholars now concur that Zarathushtra lived sometime between 1800-1200 BCE. Likewise, academic translations of the Gathas, the other parts of the Avestan canon, and the Pahlavi exegeses could have been incorporated without confusing the average reader. Practices and customs of Zarathushtis in Iran warrant inclusion as well. Brief insights from studies by historians of religion and by anthropologists on Zarathushtrian rituals and ceremonies should have included. Readers would have appreciated an index. Additional photographs depicting Zoroastrian rituals may have been valuable as well. But those are mere nitpickings, for the book is thoroughly enjoyable to read. The handsome volume is a generous offering from a believer who strives to better understand the complexity of Zarathushtrian religion.

# If Today Be Sweet

BOOKS  
&  
ARTS



**Author:** Thrity Umrigar

**Pages:** 296, **Price** \$24.95

**Published:** 2007 by William Morrow (An Imprint of Harper Collins Publishers)

**Reviewed by:** Shazneen Rabadi Gandhi

Thrity Umrigar's latest book, *If Today Be Sweet*, is the endearing tale of Tehmina Sethna's struggle to resolve a monumental question that faces her upon the passing of her husband, Rustom: Tehmina must decide whether to stay in the United States with her only son, Sorab, his American wife, Susan, and

sheds a different perspective on her concerns; confrontations with an abusive mother and her two sons next door, who help her find courage; inadvertent entanglement with the American press; and even frequent conversations with the spirit of her dearly departed Rustom – not only allow Tehmina to find herself again, but also make her decision.

The book also provides insight into the life of the children, Sorab and Susan, and the pressures they face in raising their own son and also taking care of Tehmina, who they clearly care for very much, despite the occasional disagreements, cultural disconnects, and inconveniences she brings to the fore.

The resolution of the novel is somewhat glib. But it is not the resolution, but rather the journey to it, which makes the book a good read. What Umrigar carefully fleshes out is that each perspective is valid. Holding together a family spread out by migration is hard work for everyone involved.

Many Zarathushti families, spread across the continents, will be able to relate to Umrigar's Parsi characters and their dilemmas. Furthermore, Zarathushtis in North America will be able to relate to Umrigar's portrayal of small Parsi communities in the US and life in suburbia on the continent. She provides a gentle, humorous, but accurate, critique of both.

Thrity Umrigar should be commended for providing us with an insightful, entertaining book, which promises to spark many discussions about family life in this day and age.

their son, Cawas – who goes by "Cookie" in America - or to return to the apartment in Bombay, where she had happily spent her life with Rustom.

Having relied on her husband to make all major decisions for her while he was alive, Tehmina is at a loss on how to decide where to live without his guidance. She has come to believe that Rustom was the cause of all her happiness. Indeed, his charm and wit, and frequent quoting of the poems of Omar Khayyám (from which the book derives its title), apparently made for far smoother interactions with their son and his American wife, than do Tehmina's attempts to fit in with them. This leaves her in a puddle of indecisiveness.

But her experiences during her stay with her son's family -- interactions with a good natured Jewish grandmother, who

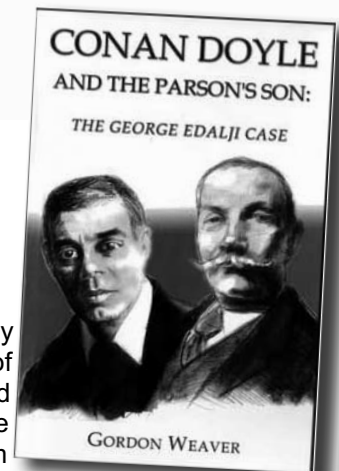
## CONAN DOYLE AND THE PARSON'S SON

by Gordon Weaver

Vanguard Press, Cambridge (UK), 2006, pp 371, £9.99 - Vol 16 No 1 (pbk), ISBN: 1-843862-41-7.

Reviewed in Commonwealth Lawyer April 2007

That miscarriages of justice are not a feature of modern times is amply illustrated by this fascinating book. It tells the story of George Edalji, a Staffordshire solicitor of Parsi extraction, who was charged and convicted of maiming a horse in 1903 and sentenced to seven years' penal servitude. What is particularly interesting about the story is that the disturbing facts of Edalji's case — the racist campaign against him by local residents, the fabrication of evidence, and the lackadaisical attitude of the police — attracted the attention of Arthur Conan Doyle who, in a real life imitation of his fictional detective, delved deep into the matter and helped Edalji secure a pardon. Gordon Weaver, had chanced upon newspaper clippings of the case in a public library and carried out further researches, and has written an eminently readable book.





## HOME EQUITY CREDIT LINES LETTER

A Parsi lady had a fine home in New England. But this distinguished woman ended up throwing away all her equity! She scrambled at the last minute to help her aunt's daughter Ruby get settled in the USA. But she really had trouble since she also went through an unexpected work layoff. If she had had a line of credit from before her job layoff, she would have had an easier time when Ruby arrived. Let me explain how lines of credit work.

If you need to borrow money, home equity lines may be one useful source of credit. Initially at least, they may provide you with large amounts of cash at relatively low interest rates, and they may provide you with certain tax advantages unavailable with other kinds of loans. (Check with your tax advisor for details.)

At the same time, home equity lines of credit require you to use your home as collateral for the loan. This may put your home at risk if you are late or cannot make your monthly payments. Those loans with a large final (balloon) payment may lead you to borrow more money to pay off this debt, or they may put your home in jeopardy if you cannot qualify for refinancing. If you sell your home, most plans require you to pay off your credit line at that time. In addition, because home equity loans give you relatively easy access to cash, you might find that you borrow money more freely.

Remember too, there are other ways to borrow money from a lending institution. For example, you may want to explore second mortgage installment loans. Although these plans also place an additional mortgage on your home, second mortgage money usually is loaned in a lump sum, rather than in a series of advances made available by writing checks on an account. Also second mortgages usually have fixed interest rates and fixed payment amounts.

You also may want to explore borrowing from credit lines that do not use your home as collateral. These are available with your credit cards or with unsecured credit lines that let you write checks as you need the money. In addition, you may want to ask about loans for specific items, such as cars or tuition.

REFERENCE; Jonathan Shaw, "Debtor Nation", Harvard Magazine, July-August, 2007.

*Mr. Rusi D. Gandhi, MBA is a Real Estate Broker and Investor (at [www.RusiGandhi.com](http://www.RusiGandhi.com))*

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## WORLD ZARATHUSHTI CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

**WINNERS OF THE WORLD ZARATHUSHTI RECOGNITION PROGRAM 2007**

**Outstanding Zarathushti Entrepreneur**

*Mr. Khodadad Godrej Irani, Houston, Texas*

**Outstanding Zarathushti Professional**

*Dr. Roshan B. Bhappu, Tucson, AZ*

**Outstanding Young Zarathushti Entrepreneur/Professional**

*Mr. Shayan Italia, London, England*

The awards ceremony will take place in Pune, India, January 2008

*PHIL MADON [pars09@yahoo.com](mailto:pars09@yahoo.com)*

*WZCC, Australia*



## WZCC: A Growing and Spreading Community

At the North American Conference in Toronto, there was a very stimulating WZCC day, followed by some very interesting developments.

There was a Trade Delegation to Pakistan, organized by the Indian Chapter of WZCC (and coordinated by Edil Katrak), thanks to the very generous hospitality and hosting by Mr. Byram Avari, who demonstrated a true Zarathusti spirit of giving. With Byram's help a Karachi WZCC Chapter is being set up, with Soli Parakh as the Chapter Chair.

Another interesting event was a meeting of the New York Chapter held in Boston, with a group of members coming down for it. This was Edul Davar's idea and spearheaded by him and Arnaz Maneckshana, the NY Chapter Chair. This (along with Rohinton Rivetna's urging) spurred the Boston group to think of opening a Boston Chapter, and so on the 27th of October, a joint meeting was held with the New York Group. The meeting was held at MIT and organized by Dr. Zareen Karani Araoz and the Boston team, including Secretary Dilnavaz Shroff, Cyrus Mehta, Mehernush Shroff and many others, who also offered home hospitality to some of the visiting group (including Firoz Jungalwalas and Jimmy Mistry).



Thanks to Usheen Davar a youth group also came down for this from NYC and met with the Boston Youth Group, led by Daryush Mehta. Speakers included Firdaus Bhathena who involved the audience in debugging the Myths of Being an Entrepreneur, Cyrus Mehta spoke on his experiences of building "Cytel", Isaac Delapena from Nokia stimulated people by talking about cutting edge mobile technologies, Rustam Lalkaka from NYC gave an overview of technology and entrepreneurship in a globalized world, and the Mody family (Kavas, Beroz and Mehernosh) shared in a very engaging way their experiences of setting up a family business.

# WZCC

Bomy Boyce came down from Toronto and graced the occasion and spoke about the history of Zarathushti entrepreneurship and explained the Business Matrix concept. Edul Davar spoke about the history of WZCC. The session was Chaired by Zareen Karani Araoz. This was followed by dinner. The next day the group went to the North Shore---Rockport, Halibut State Park and Lunch at Woodman's in Essex, and continued the fellowship and networking. The Boston Chapter is grateful to the NY Chapter for helping in its establishment and also to ZAGBA and individuals like Yasmin Bhumgara and others who have contributed generously for this occasion. Boston has great plans to support local businesspeople, entrepreneurs and youth in their efforts and form a real community of professionals, as well as reach out and connect with other organizations like TIE etc.

On another note, the Business Matrix Units (BMU) continue to be established. One such Unit is now established in Toronto. A contest has been started offering financing of \$100,000 to people who would submit the best business plan. The Mumbai Chapter has already held a one-day seminar with interested members to exchange ideas and opportunities.

WZCC is a growing network. It is important that we focus on supporting one another in concrete ways and aim to help one another be as successful as we can, so that this feels like a real community and professional home for Zarathushti professionals.

We hope that as many as can will attend the AGM in Pune in the beginning of January. For details, please check the web-site: <wzcc.net> We encourage all Zarathushti entrepreneurs, as well as business and professionals to join this network, reap its benefits and help enrich the WZCC community.

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